

Bible Problems Fairly Met

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BIBLE PROBLEMS
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BIBLE PROBLEMS FAIRLY MET

By

Rev. Grant Stroh

*Author of His Church, His Glory, The Next
World-Crisis, God's World-Program,
Gabriel and Michael, etc.*

With Introduction by

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INTRODUCTION

The contents of this book appeared originally in the department known as "Practical and Perplexing Questions" of *The Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, covering a period of eight years. In the capacity of an editor of the *Monthly* I read practically all the answers, and after running that gauntlet they had still to face the criticism of thousands of readers throughout the world. Having survived all this one may believe the work possesses enduring merit and will be found useful for the coming generation.

It appears on the surface of the work, and therefore it is hardly necessary to add, that the author, the Rev. Grant Stroh, is well qualified for his task, academically and theologically, but beyond that by a deep and thorough knowledge of the Bible, the inspired Word of God.

In preceding years, other works of this kind have gone out from other Bible teachers, but there is always room for more, and there is an attraction about a new book of this nature not possessed by an older one. It was at my suggestion indeed, that Mr. Stroh gathered up his answers to questions in the *Monthly* in this permanent form, and I trust the book may find a wide market and prove a great blessing to many.

JAMES M. GRAY

*The Moody Bible Institute,
Chicago, Ill.*

BIBLE PROBLEMS FAIRLY MET

CHAPTER I THE ARKS

CAPACITY OF NOAH'S ARK

How are we to answer the charge that it would have taken fifty arks the size of Noah's to contain a pair of all living creatures, and to gather, count, and board tens of thousands of specimens from all over the world?

Would it not be well to use a little sanctified common sense in the interpretation of the inspired record? In the first place, there is nothing that compels us to conclude that Noah gathered, either personally or otherwise, animals from the Arctic, or from Australia, or Africa, or Europe. Evidently the ingathering of animals was comparatively local. It could not well have been otherwise. In the second place, Noah did not take a pair of every variety, but only of the species. These are not so numerous as might be supposed. In the third place, we should not underestimate the great capacity of Noah's Ark. The following extract is taken from the *Engineering News-Record*:

"Our modern interest in ships has started a ship expert on the measurements of Noah's Ark, and he has translated the Bible dimensions into terms of modern measurement so as to make the ark 480 feet long, 80 feet wide and 48 feet deep. Her tonnage was 11,413, and she had plenty of room for pairs of all the distinct species of animals that are classed by Buffon (244), and she could have accommodated one thousand persons and then had plenty of room for the storage of supplies."

ARK OF THE COVENANT

What became of the Ark of the Covenant? How could worship have been restored without it? How can a future restored Temple be complete without it?

Since nothing is definitely known as to what became of it when the Temple of Solomon was destroyed, it is mere conjecture to surmise. The passage in 2 Esdras (10:22) intimates that it was destroyed, while another passage from the *Apocrypha* (2 Mac. 2:4-9) states that Jeremiah, at the command of God, took the Ark and hid it in a cave in Mt. Sinai. This is not impossible. Jeremiah is also said to have prophesied that the Ark of the Covenant would be found when the Lord would reappear in glory to regather His ancient people (vv. 7, 8). But since Maccabees is not regarded as an inspired book, we do not accept its statements without reservation. Concerning the necessity of the Ark for worship in the future restored Temple, we would remind our questioner that, so far as we know, there was no ark in connection with the restored worship of the second Temple, and hence would not be necessary in the future Temple. We believe Haggai 2:7-9 gives the reason, "The desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this latter house with my glory. . . . The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former," evidently referring to the fact that Jesus Himself should appear in person there. May we not for the same reason infer that there will be no need of a symbol representing the presence of Jesus, since in Jerusalem will be established "the throne of the Lord"? Upon this point it may be well to note what Jeremiah has to say, since he is referred to in the *Apocrypha*: "In those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more" (Jer. 3:16, 17).

CONTENTS OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

The Apostle Paul states in Hebrews 9:4 that the Ark contained the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod, and the two tables of stone; while in 2 Chronicles 5:10 the statement is made that the Ark contained only the two tables of stone. The statement in Chronicles may mean *at that time*, with the inference that the rod and the pot of manna also were formerly in the Ark. The pot of manna and Aaron's rod were commanded to be laid up "before Jehovah" and "before the testimony." Some have thought that this must mean beside the Ark, but it is safer to accept Paul's statement that they were within the Ark.

ARK OF BULRUSHES

Into what kind of an ark was the infant Moses placed? Are there any other similar historical instances?

The same Hebrew word is used of Noah's Ark, and means a vessel to float. Evidently made of papyrus reeds and coated with a mixture of bitumen and mud to make it water-proof. A similar story is told of Sargon I, King of Babylonia. This method of abandoning children is said not to have been uncommon, but in the case of Moses the basket in which he was placed was carefully watched in order that the child be cared for and traced.

CHAPTER II

BAPTISM

IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM

Do you believe and teach that baptism is necessary to salvation? See Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38.

In the sense of "baptismal regeneration," which is a doctrine of the Romish church, we do not believe that baptism is essential to salvation; but we do believe that it is necessary to be baptized, for it is an evidence of our faith in Jesus Christ, and since He has so commanded. In Mark 16:16 baptism is the external "signature" of belief on the Lord Jesus Christ, just as in Romans 10:10 the "confession with the mouth" is an external evidence of personal faith. Likewise in Acts 2:38 baptism does not procure the remission of sins, but is the "visible seal of that remission." Only God can forgive sins, and He can do it, and has done it, apart from baptism; but repentance for sin and submission to baptism is an evidence upon our part that we are worthy of forgiveness.

NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

The following contribution from a friend in Kentucky is one which we heartily endorse:

Apart from the Catholic view of "baptismal regeneration" will you please consider another view of baptism as essential to the forgiveness of the penitent's old sins? The view is that God is supreme and can appoint forgiveness in any manner he wishes, and the commands of God include both faith and baptism. "He that *believeth and is baptized* shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Briefer expressions should not be interpreted contrary to this. The messenger whom the Lord sent to penitent Paul said, "Be baptized and wash away thy sins." Without minimizing or magnifying the ordinance, let the Word of God stand at its full face value. When the convicted multitude asked Peter what to do, he said: "Repent ye, *and* be baptized every one of you . . . unto the remission of your sins." It seems that sinners should be told the same thing throughout the Gospel Age. Who doubts that repentance is a condition of pardon? But here *two* things are

mentioned as lying between these inquirers and the remission of their sins. Baptism is plainly commanded. It is essential to obedience. Jesus "became unto all them that *obey* him the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9). This view of baptism as essential to salvation does not at all regard the water as having any special power, but holds that Jesus made the act of baptism a condition. It no more ascribes power to water than the view that Naaman had to wash in Jordan in order to obtain freedom from leprosy ascribes curative power to Jordan water. Because the blind man was commanded to wash in Siloam (John 9:7, 11) it was essential to his recovery of sight that he do what he was plainly told to do. This view does not entertain the idea that the water of Siloam was of itself a cure for blindness.

BAPTISM AND THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

What is the order of water baptism in relation to the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The accounts in Acts 9:17, 18 and 22:16 would indicate that Paul received the Holy Spirit before he was baptized. The experience of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:47) was similar. This is the reverse of the order in Acts 2:38 and 8:16. A person may be unsaved, though baptized; and saved, though unbaptized. No external rite saves. Salvation is solely by grace.

BAPTISM OF JUDGMENT

Will you kindly explain Luke 12:49, 50, especially the phrase, "already kindled"?

While fire is one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit, it usually signifies judgment. Verse 49 may seem to mark a break with what precedes, but in reality there is a close connection. Our Lord had just been speaking about judgment upon the unfaithful and harsh servant (vv. 46, 48). That "fire" had already begun. Christ came to start it. It was "already kindled" and would burn up the chaff (Luke 3:17); but the completion of judgment would not occur before the consummation of the age (Matt. 13:41, 42). Even the "baptism" of which Christ speaks (v. 50) is a judgment, for, as our representative, He bore the judgment of the sins of the whole world.

BAPTISMAL FORMULA

When did the Church begin to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

This trinitarian formula was the one which Christ gave to His disciples when He commissioned them to evangelize the world (Matt. 28:19). We have reason to believe that it was used by the Church from the beginning.

MODE NON-ESSENTIAL

Will one's spiritual life suffer, or one's soul be lost, if he has not been baptized by immersion?

We do not consider the form of baptism as vital to salvation. Even an immersed person may remain unsaved. Salvation is solely through Christ, whom we receive by faith. If one is persuaded that immersion is vital to his salvation, his spiritual joy probably will not be full until he has been immersed. But our knowledge of Christian history and biography and our personal acquaintance with both immersed and unimmersed Christians lead us to believe that one class is no more holy than the other. Mere external rites have no power to change the heart.

RELATION OF BAPTISM TO THE LORD'S SUPPER

Must baptism precede the Lord's Supper? Is not the true Christian commanded to commemorate the Lord's death till He comes, regardless of whether he has been baptized? Are we baptized because we are children of God, or in order to become children of God? Has any church the right to prohibit anyone from partaking of the Lord's Supper, whether baptized or not?

Answering the last question first, we would say that the administration of the Lord's Supper is in the hands of the local church, but that the responsibility of partaking belongs to the individual. Any true Christian should be permitted to come to the Lord's table, but being a Christian naturally presupposes his baptism. In our opinion, water baptism does not make us Christians, but is the outward symbol of our having been baptized by the Holy Spirit and is rightly required in most churches for membership.

BAPTIZING FOR THE DEAD

How can the living be baptized for the dead? What does 1 Corinthians 15:29 mean?

Three principal interpretations have been given to this: (1) That the baptized persons were substitutes for others who had believed, but who had died before being baptized. We reject this explanation as unscriptural upon the face of it. We cannot be baptized by proxy any more than we can be saved by proxy—especially after death. (2) That people believed in being baptized in view of approaching death—as a matter postponed by them until the last minute. But nothing in the context supports this view. (3) That people were baptized because of the belief that those who have been baptized into Christ would be raised in the resurrection of believers. Paul is arguing in this chapter for the fact of the bodily resurrection. He says, in effect, if there be no resurrection, what is the use of being baptized? If death ends all, why be subject to baptism? But, in view of the certainty of the coming resurrection of the body, baptism is a reasonable ordinance. We quote Sir Robert Anderson: "Baptism symbolized death with Christ; what meaning has it then if there is no resurrection? For if Christ was not raised, our oneness with Him in death points only to the tomb."

BURIED IN BAPTISM

Will you please explain Romans 6:4, 5, and Colossians 2:12?

Romans 6:4, 5: First of all, it is well to note that Christ's death is continually referred to, and not the grave. Being baptized into Christ means baptized into His death (v. 3). This occurred upon the cross. There it was that "our old man was crucified with Him" (v. 6). The better translation of the first clause of verse 4 is "by baptism with him we were buried into (His) death." No man can thus baptize us. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, through whom we are united to Christ, and through whose indwelling we share all the benefits of that union. Moreover, we who died with Christ also arose with Him. Hence we are to live a resurrected life. I may add that the translation in the King James Version of verse 5 is also misleading. It should read as in the Revised Version: "For if we have become united with him by the likeness of his death, we shall be also by the likeness of his resurrection." The word "planted" in the Old Version is wholly misleading.

Colossians 2:12: This verse should be interpreted in connection with verses 10, 11, and 13. The key expression is, "ye are

complete in him" (v. 10). By nature we were dead through our trespasses (v. 13). But, having been crucified with Christ, we also were raised with Him (v. 12); or, "quickened together with him" (v. 13). Since the circumcision, the crucifixion, and the resurrection are all plainly spiritual, why not also the baptism? Can we single that out and make it physical, while all the other experiences are spiritual? That they are spiritual experiences is further shown in the past tenses of the verbs: "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein we also were raised with him through faith in the working of God" (R. V.). God accomplished all of these things for us in Christ, not at the time of our water baptism, but at the time of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The personal experience of their benefits are entered into when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLE

AUTHENTICITY OF THE BIBLE

(1) Is not the Bible the only authentic history of creation and of the first two thousand years of human history? (2) Why should men account for the origin of the earth in some other way? (3) Does it not indicate more faith in God to believe that He might have created the earth in six ordinary days of twenty-four hours? (4) Have we any proof of "oral repetition" regarding the Pentateuch?

(1) The only authentic account of creation, because such knowledge could come only by revelation. While archæology is increasing our knowledge of this historical period, the Bible is still the only authentic record so far as it goes. (2) Upon the part of some there is the desire to eliminate special revelation and the supernatural element in the Bible. (3) Not necessarily. Whatever the time or the method, the result must be attributed to God. (4) The book of Deuteronomy is largely a repetition of the laws given upon Mt. Sinai. Oral giving of the law was a necessity at the first. But the Pentateuch no doubt was soon reduced to writing.

Will you please refer to some historians in Christ's time who set forth the actual events in Christ's life? If they actually occurred would not the historians of that day have exalted Christ as much as they exalted Alexander the Great?

Historians are not strictly contemporaneous writers. They come afterwards and are better able to view events in their proper perspective and relationships. The four Gospels were not written while the events were occurring, but during that first generation of believers. As for contemporaneous writings, there are references to Christ by Josephus, the Jewish historian; by Tacitus, Roman historian; and also by Pliny, Suetonius, and Juvenal. For further evidence of Christ and His work we might appeal to the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. But why appeal to writers outside of the New Testament when no ancient

books that have come down to us have equal evidence for their genuineness and authenticity? Are not they sufficient? John's Gospel, in particular, was written for the express purpose of presenting indisputable evidence that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Have you prayerfully examined *that* evidence? John and the other apostles were the real contemporaries of Jesus and they spoke and wrote of the things they knew. If their testimony is rejected, surely no other testimony would have any weight with you. The New Testament writers were real historians. No better or more reliable have ever written.

WERE THE APOSTLES MISTAKEN?

Were the writers of the New Testament ever mistaken? For example, see James 5:8.

No, they never were mistaken in what they wrote, though this claim is being made by certain professors even in our orthodox (?) theological seminaries. The particular mistake referred to is, "The Lord is at hand." Since James taught the imminency of our Lord's return and He did not come, therefore the professor concludes that James was "simply mistaken." In other words, James was not inspired when he wrote those words. Would it not be more modest to inquire as to what James meant when he said the Lord is "at hand"?

CANON OF THE BIBLE

(1) What council determined the canon of the Bible? (2) Why were some of the Epistles and other books rejected?

(1) A uniform tradition claims that the Old Testament canon was determined by Ezra and the Great Synagogue; at all events it was confirmed by Christ. The New Testament canon was a gradual growth. At first some books were acknowledged and some disputed, but by degrees the whole of the present canon came to be generally recognized. The early church Councils simply bore witness to that fact; they did not themselves determine the canon.

(2) In deciding which books should be included in the canon of the New Testament, the history of each book was considered and also its usage in the church. In addition to this external or historical evidence, the internal or spiritual evidence had great weight. Writings inspired of God assert their own "authority" (Heb. 2:12). "The Scriptures by their own weight . . . crushed all rivals out of existence."

CLOSED CANON

Is the canon of the Bible closed?

The Old Testament canon was closed about 365 B. C., when the last book was added; while the canon of the New Testament was closed before the middle of the third century A. D. This was not done officially, but by common consent, as it were.

PRESERVATION OF THE BOOKS

Where were the books of the Bible kept after being written and before they were put together into one volume?

The books of the Law were kept with the Ark of the Covenant. Later the historical and poetical books from Joshua to David were placed in the Temple. Still later the prophetic and the historical books were added after the Temple was rebuilt. As to the New Testament, this also was a gradual formation. No doubt it became the custom for each of the larger churches to provide itself with a collection of the books known to be of apostolic origin for its own use.

THE APOCRYPHA

Upon what authority were the books of the Apocrypha eliminated from the Scriptures?

They never belonged to the Scriptures from which they were excluded on the following grounds:

- (1) They do not claim divine authority.
- (2) In some cases they disclaim it.
- (3) They contain some statements at variance with the facts, and at variance with themselves.
- (4) They are not found in any catalogue or list of the Scriptures in the first four centuries of the Christian era.
- (5) The Jews never received them as canonical.
- (6) Christ and His Apostles never quoted them.

The Roman Catholic church has accepted them, but not until the recent date of the Council of Trent in 1545 (*Primers of the Faith*—Gray).

MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH

(1) Why do we find duplicate narratives in the Pentateuch, some of which are contradictory? (2) Why do we find difference in style and vocabulary? (3) How could Moses write an account of his death?

(1) We do not know of any "duplicate" narratives strictly so understood. The same subject is occasionally treated more than once, but not in duplicate; there is a reason for the second reference, which usually is an expansion. They never are contradictory. (2) Difference of style and vocabulary is explained by the differences in the subjects treated and the differences in the writers. (3) The Mosaic authorship does not demand that Moses wrote every word of the Pentateuch as it now stands. There are other indications, also, of editorial comments.

DID MOSES KNOW?

Our new pastor, just out of a divinity school, says he does not believe the Bible accounts of Adam and Eve, that the Bible contains mistakes, that it is not necessary to believe that Christ died for sinners in order to be saved. Can you explain anything about the story of Adam and Eve and the geological age of the world?

We ought not to be surprised that one who rejects the Genesis account of creation and of the entrance of sin into the world should also reject Christ's atonement for sin. When our Lord was here in His flesh He said to His enemies, "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" Concerning creation and Adam and Eve, you would be helped by reading a pamphlet by C. E. Putnam, entitled, *Did Moses Know?* published by The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 826 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill.

ORDER OF CREATION

Was light created before the sun and moon (Gen. 1:3-5)?

These verses in Genesis have occasioned considerable trouble, since the sun and moon are not mentioned until verses 14-19. It is supposed that for some time after the earth was created it was enveloped in mists, at which time all was darkness. Finally, God brought light to the earth and thus separated the light and the darkness. This was "one day." At a later period the sun and moon appeared, and hence we have the signs, seasons, days and years of verse 14. Some explain the light of verse 3 as electrical light. Still others call it cosmic. But verse 14 does not necessarily describe the creation of the heavenly bodies,

but only states that upon the fourth day they clearly appeared and caused the effects mentioned. When God created the heaven and the earth (v. 1) they certainly at that time came into existence.

HISTORY OR ALLEGORY?

Will you explain Galatians 4:21-31 in connection with the sixteenth and twenty-first chapters of Genesis? Does it mean that the chapters in Genesis are allegorical and not true history?

The latter part of your question is answered by Galatians 4:22, 23, as you note is a statement of facts. Abraham had two sons, one by Hagar and one by Sarah, according both to Paul and to the passages in Genesis. But Paul makes an allegorical use of the historical facts. Referring to the facts related in Genesis he says that they "contain an allegory" (R. V.). In this allegory the two women, Hagar and Sarah, represent two covenants; the one made at Mount Sinai, which is Hagar, is likened to the earthly Jerusalem, which was in bondage (under the Romans); while the other covenant, represented by Sarah, is likened to the Jerusalem that is above and free. Like Isaac we are free, since we are children of promise, but like him also we are persecuted by those who are only naturally born (vv. 28, 29). Being children of the free woman, that is, of Jerusalem that is above, our names even now are written there, and already we are citizens of that city.

BOOK OF DANIEL

(1) Is there anything in profane history that warrants the theory that the book of Daniel was written after the events had transpired? (2) That the Old Testament canon was closed and that the writer had to forge Daniel's name? (3) That the book was not written in Babylon but probably in the Holy Land? (4) Why is profane history taken as the standard with which sacred history must coincide?

Such are the positions taken by the rationalistic higher critics. (1) The basis for this theory is that a portion of the eleventh chapter so minutely portrayed the history of Antiochus Epiphanes that they decided this was history instead of prophecy, hence written after the events described, or in the second century B. C. There is no historical support for this theory. (2) Upon the

supposition that the book of Daniel was written in the second century, it was necessary to assume that the writer forged Daniel's name, and then that he or some other schemer managed to slip it into the canon without being caught. (3) This theory is based upon linguistic assumptions, such as that the Aramaic in the book is western instead of eastern, for which there is no proof. (4) Chiefly because these rationalists want to rule out the supernatural, both in history and in prophecy.

BOOK OF JONAH

Is the book of Jonah a narrative of facts, or an Old Testament parable, told for the purpose of conveying spiritual truths in pictorial form?

The latter view is widely advocated by those who reject the Bible as the Word of God, but while the book of Jonah contains important spiritual lessons, we have no good reason to question the historical facts. It is a literal narrative.

DIVINE INSPIRATION

(1) Is the Bible equally and fully inspired? (2) What is your theory of inspiration?

(1) We believe that the Bible is equally inspired in every portion. This is not to say that every portion is equally valuable to the reader, but that the record is infallible in every part. Inspiration refers to the record itself, not to the character of the content. And in speaking of the record we have in mind only the original autographs. It is generally admitted that in the course of transmission some errors have crept in, which usually are easily recognized.

Not only is the Bible equally inspired in every portion, but it is also fully inspired. That is, it is inspired not only in spots (the reader himself to determine which spots) but wholly inspired. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." The word "plenary" is used to designate this theory.

(2) First of all, we do not accept the "mechanical" theory of inspiration, according to which the human writers were merely passive instruments, like typewriting machines. Neither do we hold the "concept" theory, according to which only the thoughts were inspired of God, leaving the human writers wholly free to clothe the thoughts in any language they chose to use. The "verbal" theory, which we hold, more satisfactorily accounts for

all of the facts—such, for example, as literary style. According to this theory the Holy Spirit so vivified and controlled the men who were chosen to transmit the revelation given to them by God that they accurately recorded that revelation. In so doing, however, they were not passive but active agents. It is well to bear in mind that being Spirit-filled does not destroy one's individuality or personality, but rather intensifies natural gifts, acquired knowledge, and special training. Divine inspiration does not ignore innate qualities and acquired attainments, but rather uses them to the full. God is not less wise than men; for example, He did not choose Daniel to write the Book of Isaiah, nor Moses to write Malachi. But He did choose Paul to write Romans and John to write the Apocalypse, and so on. In each instance the man chosen was the one best qualified for his particular task. He was a free agent, but Spirit-controlled.

REVISED VERSION vs. THE KING JAMES

Is the Revised Version of the Bible better than the King James?

The King James Version has some obsolete words and phrases, and also lacks the advantages of the readings of the many manuscripts that have been discovered since that noble version was made. For students the paragraphing of the Revised Version is found more helpful, and many of the translations are to be preferred, though not all by any means. Although so many English versions of the Bible have been made, the best version for devotional and practical purposes is the King James version. But for careful analytical study the Revised Version should be used with it.

WHICH VERSION?

Do you consider the Revised Version text to have been arrived at by critical methods unreliable, and is the Authorized Version for that reason preferable?

We would not say that the text of the Revised Version was arrived at by critical methods that were unreliable, but we would say that the bias of the revisers was not always in the direction of the strictest orthodoxy. We understand that the decisions were rendered by a majority vote, and sometimes when all the members of the revision committee were not present, which in our judgment may explain some of the renderings.

We prefer the Two-Version Bible, which has the King James in the column and the Revised Version in the margin. It is published by the Oxford University Press (James M. Gray).

EXTREME LITERALISM

Are the commands in Matthew 5:29, 30 to be taken literally?

The language certainly never was intended to teach fanaticism or physical mutilation. A person may pluck out his eye (v. 29) or cut off his hand and be just as much a sinner as before. Sin does not reside in our members, but in the disposition and will. The eye or the hand are only instruments of sin. Our Lord is picturing an extreme case, one not likely to happen. But, if a member sin habitually, it is better to lose it than to lose one's soul. However, no member of the body can sin habitually, if the body is under control of the indwelling Spirit.

CHAPTER IV

BIBLE CHARACTERS

ABEL'S ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE

Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice and reject Cain's?

Because the only way for a sinner to approach God is through the sacrificial death of a substitute. Cain must have known this (Gen. 4:3-6; Heb. 11:4; 1 John 3:12).

CAIN'S WIFE

Where did Cain get his wife?

May we counter by asking where Abel got his wife? Nobody seems to be asking that question, yet it was just as much of a problem for Abel as for Cain. The answer to both would be the same; namely, that both married descendants of Adam.

ONE CAIN OR TWO?

Do you agree with the statement by E. E. Nourse in the "*New Bible Dictionary*," published by Funk and Wagnalls, that the Cain mentioned in Genesis 4:16 is not Cain the murderer of Abel? That is, that the Cain of verse 16 is not the Cain of verse 12.

We do not so agree. This is a sample of the destructive criticism in that modernistic Bible dictionary. Mr. Nourse cannot prove a single misleading statement in the article referred to. If he believed the Bible to be the Word of God he would think of Cain as the Apostle John thought of him—"Who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother" (1 John 3:12). John knew of no Cain No. 1 and Cain No. 2.

ABRAHAM'S AND ISAAC'S SIN

How do you account for the similarity of conduct upon the part of Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 20:1-8; 26:6-11)? Some modernists claim that it is a mistake—merely a repetition of the same story.

The similarity of conduct is the only similarity in the two accounts. The time, circumstances, characters are so different

that it is historically and psychologically impossible honestly to explain them in the manner stated. They are two distinct narratives. Is it impossible that the same sin should appear in both father and son?

SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

Was Abraham commanded to kill Isaac?

While the Hebrew verb in Genesis 22:1 does not mean to kill, but "to cause to go up," the command to cause Isaac to go up *as a burnt offering* certainly meant the death of Isaac. The entire context proves this. But examine Hebrews 11:17-19, which shows that Abraham fully believed in his resurrection in compliance with the divine promises.

JUDAS, THE REPROBATE

(1) How can we reconcile the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer with Judas' end (Acts 1:25)? (2) Was Judas an unrepentant backslider, or was he never born again? (3) Suppose a man, who to all appearances has been born again, should revert to his old life of sin and die therein, what would be his destination? See Matthew 26:24.

(1, 2) We have no evidence whatsoever that Judas was ever "born again"; hence he never was a true believer and never entered into the place of eternal security. (3) The reference applies primarily to Judas. It is impossible for us to say whether such a man ever was born again, or for us to determine positively that if he were, he never repented. Only God knows the heart, and only God knows who are His.

CHOOSING OF JUDAS

Why was Judas chosen to be one of the Twelve?

This fact may always remain a mystery, for evidently Christ knew the character of the man when he was chosen, and that he would betray Him. While we cannot be certain of Christ's purpose in the choosing of Judas, we may suggest that it may have been with the view of giving Satan full opportunity for knowing Christ intimately, and also of being warned of his own overthrow. This proves also that however closely one may be outwardly associated with Christ and His people, he may still be made an instrument of Satan. It also has been suggested that since it was a part of the divine plan that Jesus was to be

betrayed, and that since this could be done only by an intimate friend and one also of base character, Jesus, knowing the hearts of all men, chose Judas because He knew he would qualify for just these requirements.

MELCHIZEDEK

Who was Melchizedek?

Melchizedek was not Christ, but only a type of Christ. The phrase "without beginning of days or end of years" may be interpreted as having no recorded genealogy. He appears upon the scene of history suddenly, and as suddenly disappears. But he is referred to as a "man," and the account in Genesis never intimates that he is anything more. He was both a priest and a king, and, as such, a perfect type of Christ.

No sufficient reason exists for not accepting the plain statements of Scripture about this mysterious personage. See Genesis 14:18-20; Psalms 110:4; Hebrews 6:20. He was King of Salem, or Jerusalem, and priest of the Most High. This historical statement of the Bible has received corroboration in the deciphering of the Tel el Amarna tablets, in which the name Uru-salem (Jerusalem) is mentioned, whose king claims that he received his royal power not from natural inheritance, but from "the mighty King," who will destroy the power of his enemies. Thus the origin of the name "Jerusalem," or the city of Salem, goes back at least to the period of Babylonia's intercourse with Canaan, and there is no reason to doubt that Melchizedek was a real king and a priest of the true God.

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER

What became of Jephtha's daughter after the two months mourning? Did Jephtha slay her? If not, what sense was there in her asking two months to bewail her virginity?

Jephtha's vow (Judges 11:31) was in two parts: Either what came forth from his house to meet him would be dedicated to the Lord; or (not "and"), if unsuitable for this, it would be offered up as a burnt offering. Since it was his own daughter who came to meet him it would have been wrong to offer her as a sacrifice (Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5). He performed his vow by dedicating his daughter to Jehovah by perpetual virginity. This, probably, is the reason why she asked to bewail her virginity for two months.

JOSEPH AND LEVI

Why did Joseph and Levi lose their identity as tribal leaders, being replaced by Ephraim and Manasseh?

The two sons of Joseph were taken by Jacob to be his own (Gen. 48:5), received the patriarchal blessing (v. 9), and were given their places among the tribes (vv. 17-20). Thus the name of Joseph was dropped as a tribal name, and the names of these two sons substituted. This would have made thirteen tribes to whom the land was to be allotted; but the tribe of Levi was chosen as the priestly tribe, receiving no particular section of the land, but having forty-eight cities, together with their suburbs, scattered throughout the entire country.

WHO KILLED GOLIATH?

How do you harmonize the seeming discrepancies in 1 Sam. 17:49-51; 2 Sam. 21:19; 1 Chron. 20:5?

The Goliath slain by David was at Shochoh (1 Sam. 17:1), while the Goliath slain by Elhanan was in Gob, at which time and place an actual "battle" occurred. David slew his Goliath prior to any battle; indeed, there was no real battle at all, for the Philistines simply fled and the Israelites pursued them (vv. 51-54). Furthermore, when David slew his Goliath he was still a youth, but at the time of Elhanan's victory David was evidently well advanced in years (2 Sam. 21:17). In further determining whom Elhanan slew we learn from 1 Chronicles 20:5 that the man slain by him was "Lahmi, the brother of Goliath." The italics in 2 Samuel 21:19, being an insertion, were properly omitted from the Revised Version. The one who placed them there believed he was giving the true explanation in the light of 1 Chronicles.

PRINCE OF TYRE

What are the references that prove that the prince of Tyre in Ezekiel 28 is Satan?

No other passage is just like the one in Ezekiel 28:12-15. No other seems to be needed. It is evident that the prophet sees behind the king of Tyre a mightier one, in whom is fulness of wisdom and perfection of beauty, who was in Eden, the garden of God. Verse 14 especially is descriptive of a superhuman being. Satan's name is not used, but the description seems to fit him better than any other being.

SOLOMON

(1) Was Solomon a good man? (2) In what respect was he a type of Christ?

(1) "Good" according to the standards of that age, but he did not wholly follow God. (2) Because his reign was a reign of peace.

DEATH OF JUDAS

How do you reconcile the apparent discrepancy between Matthew 27:5 and Acts 1:18?

The statement in the latter part of the second passage probably followed the suicidal hanging of Judas, and is an additional fact.

PETER'S INSIGHT

How did Peter know that Ananias and Sapphira had kept part back of the price (Acts 5:1-11)?

There is a possibility that Peter had received private information; but the record does not give any hint of this, so we conclude that the sin was revealed to him directly by the Holy Spirit, from whom nothing can be concealed.

PAUL'S THORN IN THE FLESH

What was Paul's "thorn in the flesh"?

There are two principal hypotheses: First, that the thorn was some sensual passion; second, that it was some acute physical infirmity of the body, such as trouble with his eyes. The latter appears to be the more reasonable explanation.

CHAPTER V

APPLIED CHRISTIANITY

AMALGAMATION OF CHURCHES

In a small community containing two small, weak churches is it not advisable for them to unite?

The union of two weak churches in a small community into one self-supporting church would seem to be both desirable and economical, but in such a union no essential doctrine should be surrendered. Herein lies a grave danger, as seen in some instances in union colleges and churches upon the foreign field. The acceptance of the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice might seem sufficient, but in addition the Apostle's creed would be the shortest possible statement of faith as a basis of such a union. The chief obstacles to union would probably arise from the denominational affiliations, or in the use or acquisition of the church property. But where a union is really desired and prayerfully sought for the glory of Christ, it can usually be brought about. There must, however, be no self-seeking, but each must act for the advancement of Christ's cause.

CASTING LOTS

What is the meaning of casting lots? Should Christians practice it?

The lot was a means employed among the ancients for the impartial deciding of matters. It was used upon important occasions among the Israelites (Num. 26:55; Lev. 16:8; Josh. 7:14, 18). The manner of casting the lot is not definitely known. The choice of an apostle to succeed Judas was decided by casting lots (Acts 1:26), but this, although recorded in the New Testament, really belongs to Old Testament times, occurring before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Since He has come, He is to be our Guide through the use of prayer and the Scriptures instead of the lot.

CHRISTMAS AND EASTER

Shall we continue to celebrate Christmas and Easter?

This matter troubles the consciences of some earnest Christians. The terms are not Scriptural, but the events they celebrate are most momentous, and it seems fitting for the Church to commemorate them, just as in Old Testament times events of great importance were commemorated. Two objections are urged against this practice, one being that Christmas and Easter were heathen festivals, and of late importation into the Church, and the second that abuses have become attached to their celebration.

While the birth of Christ was not generally celebrated by the Church until after the time of Constantine (fourth century), it was celebrated locally early in that century, also in the second, and probably much earlier.

While the first definite date for the celebration of Easter was about the middle of the second century, there is reason to suppose that it was honored from early Christian history.

While now greatly abused and possessing little religious significance to many, our judgment would be against the discontinuance of the celebration of either Christmas or Easter, since they re-emphasize, to the Church and the world, the unparalleled importance of the two greatest facts in history.

NO CONVERSIONS—WHY?

Our pastor honors Christ and the Holy Spirit in his life and in his preaching, but during a pastorate of five years he has had no conversions. He does not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and I am wondering if this is the explanation of his failure?

In our judgment belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible deepens the conviction of the preacher in the importance and value of his message. Preachers who are wobbly on the subject speak with an uncertain sound, and have no vital message of salvation. Yet we wish to be charitable towards those who differ from us upon this point.

CONCERNING DIVORCE

What does the Bible teach about divorce?

The Old Testament law of divorce is found in Deuteronomy 21:3-9. This law was restrictive of a greater freedom than has

been practiced. The doctrine in the New Testament is summarized in Matthew 19:3-12. The exception to divorce has been touched upon in chapter 5, but in chapter 19 the whole subject is elaborated. Christ abrogated the liberty granted under the Mosaic law, going back to primary principles. According to Christ, only the sin of fornication makes divorce permissible. Adultery is destructive of family life and happiness. To free the innocent party in such a case is an act of justice and prevents compulsory polygamy. The teaching of Paul nowhere runs counter to the teaching of Christ upon this subject.

Marriage of the unsaved among themselves is not forbidden by God, but only the marriage of the saved with the unsaved. Divorcement of the unsaved is condemned except upon the ground of fornication, the same as among Christians. If a person be divorced while unsaved, and marry again while the former partner is living, it is sin, even though the second partner becomes a Christian.

If a person is divorced upon Scriptural grounds is it right for that person to remarry?

Upon this matter the interpretation of the church has not been entirely uniform; but we quote from *Bible Problems Explained*, by James M. Gray: "My understanding is, and I believe it is that of the Protestant church at large, with few exceptions, that in the case of divorce on the ground of adultery, the innocent party is at liberty to marry again without committing sin in so doing. The Catholic church does not grant this privilege."

USING DIVORCEES IN THE CHURCH

(1) If divorced upon Scriptural grounds is it right to marry again, and is such a one suited to become a leader in church work? (2) If a woman divorces her husband (not upon scriptural grounds) and remarries, is either she or her second husband fitted to become a leader in the church or to hold office? (3) If a minister tries to use such people, has he any right to look for spiritual blessing in his church? (4) Should a true follower of Christ co-operate and work with such a church?

While opinion is divided upon this point, most Protestant denominations hold that it is right to remarry, and if so, the matter should not debar one from becoming a leader in church work. (2) Our reply is in the negative. (3) We are not sur-

prised that spiritual results are meager. (4) This is a personal matter. By co-operation and wise counsel you might possibly bring to pass a better condition of affairs.

DECEIVING THE SICK

Is it right to deceive a patient when the motive is purely for his good?

In our judgment the sick should not be deceived. Deception reacts upon the character of the deceiver. At best the deception of a patient is only for his supposed good, while truth is always more wholesome than a lie. If the condition is serious, all the more need that the patient know in order to make sure he is in health spiritually.

FEASTING AND FASTING

Should feasting and fasting have any place in the life of the Church or the individual Christian of to-day?

As to "feasting" we know that it had a prominent place in the religion of the Jews. It was at the end of the Feast of the Passover that the Lord's Supper was instituted. The early Christians were accustomed to meet for a common meal, to which each contributed, which was followed by the Lord's Supper. So that there can be no Scriptural objection against "fellowship feasts" in the Church of to-day, especially if a religious tone be given to them.

Concerning "fasting," this also is endorsed by the practice of the early Christians (Acts 13:2; 14:23; 2 Cor. 6:5). We find also in an early document entitled *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* directions for fasting. It is probable that the Church of today would be stronger spiritually by the right observance of fasting. The abuse of it, however, might lead to asceticism, making it a means of salvation, as in days gone by.

FUNDAMENTALISM vs. CHRISTIAN LIVING

(1) Is it possible for a teacher of God's Word to teach the "fundamentals" and the "deeper truths" without loving and living them? (2) Can such a one have so little discernment of others that he chooses to fellowship with apostates and deceivers rather than with those who love the Word? (3) Are these things evidence that we are living in the Laodicean age? (4) Are we now in the apostasy?

(1) We regret to say that it is possible. One may have a merely intellectual perception of deep spiritual truths without having experienced their power in his own life. (2) We have to admit it, but this is exceptional. (3) Such things manifest the spirit of the Laodicean church, but that special period is not yet fully developed. (4) The apostasy is indeed rapidly developing (2 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Tim. 4:1, 2; 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

LIFE INSURANCE

Should a Christian take out a life insurance policy?

We know of no Scripture against this, while 1 Timothy 5:8 would seem to favor it. It surely would seem to be the part of ordinary wisdom.

What do you think about different kinds of insurance? May Christians insure their lives, properties and crops? May a Christian take out an insurance to get a fixed monthly sum in old age? Do they not distrust God by doing so? What does the Bible teach concerning this?

The Bible does not speak specifically about insurance, but we think the whole trend of Bible teaching indicates that God expects His people to use the judgment, reason and intelligence He has given them for their best welfare in the light of His Word and under the guidance of His Holy Spirit. For these reasons it seems to be a duty for the Christian to insure his property and crops, and his life also, if he has others dependent upon him who might otherwise suffer in the event of his death.

We think this also applies to insurance for a fixed monthly sum in old age. Christians do not distrust God by doing this, but on the contrary honor Him, especially when they return thanks to Him for the opportunity and ability to do it.

FAITH OR FACT?

Inasmuch as Christianity is basically a matter of faith, rather than fact, which cannot be proven to a certainty until after one's death, why should Christians want to influence other people's religious thinking, lest they become responsible for their misguidance?

In the first place, Christianity is not based upon faith, but upon fact. There would be no Christian religion, were it not for the historical facts related in the four Gospels. But, judging from the latter part of the question, the questioner probably is

inquiring about personal salvation, rather than Christianity as such. Personal salvation is indeed an experience of faith. We believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore we are saved. An experience of faith may be just as real as an experience of eating. One is in the realm of the spiritual, the other of the physical. However, all of the acts and transactions of our every day life are based upon faith, even those of the questioner. Neither does the Christian need to wait until after death to be certain of his salvation. He has already the external testimony of God's Word (for example, John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 10:28, 29) and the internal witness of the indwelling Holy Spirit to his spirit (Rom. 10:16). Being thus assured of our own salvation, the most natural thing for the Christian to do is to seek to lead other lost and misguided souls to Christ, the Saviour of men. In so doing there is no danger of wrongly guiding them, for we are following the teaching of the Word of God, which in this case is backed by personal experience.

JOINING THE CHURCH

If a person has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and been baptized is it necessary to join a local church?

The question is not one of salvation or obedience, but of expediency and privilege. A person in your position is somewhat of an anomaly. Usually baptism is a public rite of reception into a church. If saved and baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit, the matter of joining a local church is not an obligation, but since the work of the Church is carried on mainly through such organizations, it would seem best to show one's approval to be thus identified with the work. Moreover, since local churches are acknowledged centers in each community for good and for the defense and propagation of the gospel, would not it be best to endorse these things by uniting with one of them? Would not your example be helpful to others? Would you not thus be even more closely drawn to the particular members of that church, and they to you?

MARRYING THE UNEQUALLY YOKED

Should a minister officiate in the marriage of a believer to an unbeliever (2 Cor. 6:14)?

While the command of Paul, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," is much broader than the marriage

alliance, it would certainly include that. But the command applies to a minister of the gospel only in regard to his own choice of a wife for himself. That is, the responsibility of a believer marrying an unbeliever rests, according to the text, upon the believer and not upon the minister who performs the ceremony. If the believer is a member of the church which the pastor serves, it would be proper to admonish and even to advise in the matter; but in case of conscientious persistence, the member still being firm in the belief that it is "of the Lord," in our judgment the pastor would be justified in performing the ceremony. Marriage is an older institution than the Church and is for the good of society. Each case should rest upon its own merits. It would seem unwise to lay down any general rule governing a minister's part in the matter, but back of the whole problem should be pastoral instruction concerning the hurtfulness of unequal and unholy partnerships of any kind between Christians and unbelievers.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH CHOIR

Should those who habitually attend movies be permitted to sing in the church choir?

Unquestionably the habitual attendant of the movies is not the best material for a church choir. That atmosphere is not helpful to the spiritual life. Many are not conscious of this. Others do not care. Careful instruction is needed so that the people may see clearly that the emotions excited by the movies do not make them more worshipful, nor do they better fit them to sing acceptably the praises of God.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND POLYGAMY

Is it Scriptural for foreign missionaries to receive into church fellowship natives who have shown good evidence of repentance and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, but who have more than one wife?

We are informed that the practice upon the mission fields greatly varies. Some missions do not receive as members persons who are involved in polygamy, while other missions feel that allowances ought to be made. The local situation may determine in some instances. Through much prayer such matters have been happily adjusted in individual cases.

Bishop and deacons were to have only one wife (1 Tim. 3:2, 12) and some have inferred that non-official members might have more; in other words, that in a transition period some latitude was allowed in this matter, as in the case of slavery.

CHURCH OFFICERS

(1) Should office holders be the most spiritual men in the church? (2) Do all men receive the same measure of the Spirit when re-born? (3) Is such a one spiritual because he knows much Scripture? (4) Should the Christian manifest all of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23)? (5) Is the spiritual man one who is emptied of self and filled with the Spirit, yet without much Bible knowledge? (6) How can we decide who are men like Stephen and his comrades (Acts 6:5)? (7) Should voting for men of this type be done by ballot?

(1) Yes; but if possible they should also be men of spiritual knowledge. See 1 Timothy 3:1-14 for qualifications of office-bearers. (2) Apparently not. (3) One may possess much knowledge of the Scriptures and still be "carnal" (1 Cor. 3:1-3). (4) Yes. (5) A man may be filled with the Spirit, though not as yet possessing much Bible knowledge; but he will not long continue in ignorance. (6) By their lives and the character of their work. (7) It is always best to choose church officials by ballot.

PROPER APPAREL AND ADORNING

What application has 1 Timothy 2:9, 10 to present-day modes of wearing the hair, and dressing?

What Paul here condemns is immodest and "loud" apparel, together with ornaments, excessive finery, and all extremes of hair-dressing. Christian women of today, as then, should dress "modestly and quietly," but becomingly. Certain modern styles of wearing one's hair (or of dress) would fall under the condemnation of the Apostle Paul. But we should be governed somewhat by the customs of the day in which we live.

PLAYS vs. PARABLES

Is the introduction of "plays" into the church similar to Christ's impersonating His parables?

So far as we know Christ never impersonated anybody. A parable was simply spoken. We have no Scriptural command against introducing plays into the church, but it seems to be against the whole spirit of the gospel. We are commanded to "preach the word," not to impersonate it or act it out in a play, relying upon the Holy Spirit to take the Word and apply it to hearts and consciences.

UNSCRIPTURAL SCHEMES FOR RAISING MONEY

Why disapprove of auction sales, bazaars, suppers, and other schemes for raising money for the church?

(1) They deceive people into imagining they are giving to the Lord when in reality it is to themselves. (2) They lower the standards of Christ's Church by commercializing it. (3) They are unnecessary, because Christ has promised to supply all our needs if only we shall serve Him in the appointed ways. More prayer, faithful witnessing for Christ, and fuller consecration of our property would take care of all church finances. (5) They sometimes become substitutes for out-and-out giving to the Lord, which is God's method of financing His work among men. (6) Sacrificial, cheerful giving is a means of grace, and to raise money for the work of the church in any other way is to deprive individuals and the church of great spiritual blessing.

BIBLE METHOD OF RAISING MONEY

What is the Scriptural method for raising money for the church?

The Bible method of raising money for God's work is to *give* it or get others to give it. This method is founded upon spiritual laws. The way of blessing in material things is to honor the Lord with our substance. To adopt other means of raising money for the cause of Christ is to deprive one's self and others of a means of grace. When we feed people or sell them something they simply pay for what they get. They obtain no spiritual enrichment. The Bible method of raising money is by tithes and free-will offerings. Genesis 14:20; 28:22; Deuteronomy 14:22; Malachi 3:8-10; Exodus 35:5; 36:5; 1 Chronicles 29:6-9; 2 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9.

SECRET SOCIETIES

(1) Can Christians safely belong to secret societies? (2) Does 2 Corinthians 6:14 apply to lodges? Does it apply also to Christians marrying unbelievers?

(1) A Spirit-filled Christian is "safe" anywhere. But we do not believe such a Christian would remain long in such societies; and since those Christians who are in these societies are, for the most part, weak and uninformed Christians, such associations are often hurtful to their spiritual life. (2) This passage would seem to forbid the relationship mentioned and all others of similar character.

SEPARATION OR NOT?

Do you believe in giving money to a church, and belonging to it, where the minister does not believe in repentance, or hell, or conversion, or the Second Coming, or the story of Jonah?

As to the financial support of such a church you are not to consider what you give as given to the minister, but to the church. The work of the church must be carried on, no matter if the minister does not believe the truth. Better go on giving, but also lovingly and prayerfully "deal" with your pastor. As to separation from a church which fully endorses the beliefs (or rather unbeliefs) that you mention, this must be a matter of personal decision. Ordinarily it is best not to withdraw from the church. Yet there come times, such as that of the great Reformation, when such a course may be the wisest one to pursue.

ENRICHING THE RICH

Why did the Master give the unused talent to the man that had ten, instead of to the man who had only four?

In the first place, the talents had been apportioned to each according to his ability (v. 15); and in the second place, probably to emphasize the principle stated in verse 29. While the two-talented man had proved himself to be just as faithful as the five-talented man, our Lord here follows the great ethical principle that the man who proves his worth the most conspicuously is the man who is intrusted with more.

CHURCH SOCIALS

Is it right for church and young people's societies to have socials with program and refreshments, after which nothing is said on religion—nothing but worldly talk and laughter?

Social relaxation is needful. Social gatherings in the name of religion are not to be disparaged. But in our opinion, after an experience and observation of more than a quarter of a century, such gatherings are of very little help to the church unless a religious tone is given to them. They are helpful in getting people acquainted with one another, but otherwise they seldom "get anywhere." Not to have some helpful Christian message or personal work program in connection with the various kinds of church socials is to neglect to make use of a valuable opportunity.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE GOVERNMENT

Should the Christian seek to make his government Christian? Should he be eager to see Christian men in office? Have we any ground for hoping to make any government Christian before Christ comes? To what extent is the Christian to try to improve his government?

Judging from the past it would seem futile to expect to make any government Christian, but it is the Christian's duty as a citizen to do what he can to improve his government, by advocating just laws, by keeping the laws and helping others to do so, by voting for good men, and by himself becoming the highest type of official. There will be no perfect government in this world before Christ returns to reign.

How can the exhortations in Romans 13:1; Titus 3:1, and 1 Peter 2:13 be reconciled to the fact that thousands of Christians have suffered martyrdom because they declined to submit themselves to human governments?

When man-made laws are contrary to the divine laws, we have to choose to "obey God rather than men" even though we suffer martyrdom.

(1) Should a Christian vote and take an active part in the affairs of the government? (2) Should not a Christian demand law enforcement and use his influence to keep his community clean? (3) Should not ministers warn the youth against the devices and allurements of Satan?

(1) Voting is a duty, and one that ought not to be shirked right now. (2) By all means. (3) Most certainly. But a distinction should be made between a church, as such, going into politics, and the individual member of the church; nor should a pastor use his pulpit for political propaganda.

MEANING OF THE POUND

What is the meaning of the "pound" in the parable in Luke 19:12-27?

In contrast with the unequal number of talents in the parable in Matthew 24, the pound suggests something which all the servants have in common during the period of Christ's absence from the earth, such as opportunity for service or the use of our knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. It could hardly mean our common salvation, as suggested, for that is a possession which we are neither rewarded for nor deprived of.

COMPULSION IN SERVICE

How do you explain Matthew 5:41?

The compulsion here mentioned is apparently of a governmental or military nature, which is not to be resisted but entered into willingly, even to the doing of more than was required. In our relation to Christ such service is the joyful doing of more than He asks of us.

UNJUST STEWARD

Please explain the eighth and ninth verses of Luke 16.

The servant is not commended by Christ, but by "his lord." The latter part of the verse is Christ's comment: "The sons of this age are wiser for their generation than the sons of light": that is, they utilize their material advantages better than do the others their spiritual advantages. In verse nine, the sense seems to be that just as the steward made friends for himself in this life by the use of mammon, so we, the sons of light, should use the same mammon that it may make friends for us in eternity. As an example, the Christian who uses his means for soul-saving work is doing that very thing.

TITHING

(1) What is tithing? (2) Did Jesus teach us to give more than the tenth?

(1) Tithing means the giving of one-tenth of the income after deducting the business expenses accrued in securing it. (2) Jesus approved of the practice, but made no statement concerning its practice during this age of grace. All that we have belongs to Him, but it is for each Christian to decide what proportion should be returned to Him.

Is the ancient law of tithing binding upon Christians?

While we, personally, practice tithing, and while we believe it was practiced before the time of Moses, and therefore not strictly Jewish, we are inclined to believe that, for the Christian, tithing is a principle and a privilege rather than a law. Under grace we should be willing to do our utmost. Some should certainly give more than the tithe, and every Christian should give proportionately. The law for the Christian seems to be clearly stated in 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, although the exact proportion is not given. The law of the tithe is not excluded in this passage, however, and is a good principle for most Christians to follow.

Should any of my tithe money be used for the food and hospital expenses of my family?

"The tithe is the Lord's" and should be devoted to the furtherance of His cause. The needs of those who are naturally dependent upon you are not to be met out of your tithe money.

A mortgage as part of an inheritance has just been paid. Is not this subject to tithing?

The Old Testament tithe was upon the increase of the land, not upon the land itself. Else each year the allotment would have grown smaller. Whatever the form of the investment, that represents principal. It can be tithed if you wish to do so, but strictly the tithe is upon the interest or increase.

(1) Ought a Christian tithe the money of a matured insurance policy? (2) What amount thus received is to be tithed?

The question to be decided is whether this money is income or principal; or, what part is income, and what part principal. Since such a form of insurance is based upon yearly premiums, together with accrued interest, we would suggest that only the accrued interest would be subject to tithing, since the premiums would represent the investment.

(1) If a tither marries and gives half of his income to his wife, tithing only his half and urging her to tithe hers, is this just to God? (2) Is it a good investment to give one third of my tithe to the conversion of the Jews?

(1) So fortunate a wife as yours no doubt will not need much urging to comply with your wishes in the matter. If not, how will God view a relationship which reduces His income one-half? Do you still retain complete control of your business? If so, are you not responsible for what you do with the whole of your income? If responsible, how can you dispose of half of it before tithing it, or else give it upon the condition that it will be tithed? (2) We heartily approve of work among the Jews, but it is for the tither to decide what portion should be given to it.

WITHDRAWING CHURCH SUPPORT

Should we support a church with our money whose minister does not believe in repentance or conversion? Does such a man believe in the Bible as the Word of God? How can a true believer continue giving to a church that retains such a minister? Would it not be an endorsement of false teaching and be disloyal to Christ?

Will not God hold me accountable for not rightly using His money? Since the church employs the minister and pays his salary, is not the church to that extent responsible for the errors he proclaims? Is it right to contribute to a church that retains a minister who is known to teach things contrary to the Word of God? Ought we not separate ourselves and seek fellowship elsewhere?

Such questions grow out of the situation in which some churches now find themselves, owing to the presence in their pulpits of men trained in modernistic seminaries. We advise that the pastor who preaches false doctrines be patiently and lovingly shown his error. If he still persists, the matter should be called to the attention of the church officials. In case action is not taken, then, in our judgment, it is proper to withhold one's financial support. Moreover, a situation may develop in which it will seem advisable even to withdraw from the church. The great Reformation of the sixteenth century was such a time of separation.

WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS

I like to dance, play cards, and go to theaters, and the majority of my Christian friends believe there is no harm in these pleasures so long as you conduct yourself properly. What is your opinion?

Such a problem is not decided by what one likes, or even by the majority of one's friends. The question for the Christian is not chiefly moral, but spiritual, hence would it not be wiser to be guided by those who are spiritually minded, rather than by those who are worldly minded? The question, moreover, is not simply whether it harms you, but also whether your example may not cause some weaker brother to fall. But, confining our answer to the personal harmfulness of these amusements, we have observed that Christians who indulge in them week after week, and year after year, make little, if any growth in grace and knowledge. Such Christians do not really enjoy prayer and Bible study, and devote little time to them. Furthermore, the *atmosphere* of the ballroom or of the theater is not conducive to the health of the spiritual life, and frequently not of the physical life. God cannot make much use of a card-playing, dancing, theater-going Christian. They unfit for spiritual service. Such Christians are seldom, if ever, fully dedicated to God and willing to make personal sacrifice in His service. The pleasure which you say you derive from these worldly amusements cannot compare with Christ's joy and peace, which He would give to you if you would wholly devote yourself to the doing of His good will.

What would you do for one that believes in Christ, and yet is wicked, and will not agree to give up the things of the world?

How can one be a true believer in Christ, and yet be wicked? Do not be deceived on this point. If one has Christ he cannot remain wicked. When Christ really comes into the heart, wickedness departs. If one loves Christ he will be glad to give up whatever prevents his serving Christ.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH

THE HISTORICAL CHURCH

Is the Church in the New Testament the same as the Church in the Old Testament?

The Christian Church belongs not to Old Testament times, but to New. It dates from the day of Pentecost. In the Old Testament we have the Kingdom, in the New Testament the Church. The distinctions between the two are clearly and sharply drawn. Much misinterpretation of Scripture is due to confusing the two.

While it is true that Stephen refers to Moses as being "in the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38) in no sense has this any reference to the Christian Church.

MISSION OF THE CHURCH

What is the mission of the Church?

The mission of the Church is not to "subdue the world and restore it to Christ." Neither is that mission one of simply bettering social, industrial, and economic conditions and international relationships. In a word the mission of the Church is to go "into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," a very individualistic mission.

THE ELECT

Who are the "elect"?

The "elect" form a special class in distinction from the non-elect, or unregenerate. All of God's people are the elect, whether Jew or Christian. The elect of Matthew 24:22, 31 would seem to refer to the Israelites, whom God calls His elect (Isa. 45:4); while such passages as 2 Timothy 2:10 and 1 Peter 1:2 evidently refer to the Church.

A DISTINCTION

(1) What is the difference between the "kingdom of heaven" and the Church? (2) Were not both established

on the day of Pentecost? Are not wheat and tares mingled together in each?

(1) The distinction is not always clear. Christendom is perhaps synonymous with the kingdom of heaven, which includes the true Church. (2) In the world-field Christ sowed good seed, "The sons of the kingdom," while Satan sowed tares (Matt. 13:38, 39). In our opinion the Church is not represented by the wheat, for the tares are taken out first and burned, leaving the wheat behind (v. 30), whereas the Church is to be removed from the world prior to those judgments. The wheat are the righteous (v. 43) who will be preserved through the judgments that are to fall upon the world in connection with the return of the Son of Man.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

(1) What is the biblical significance of the "laying on of hands"? (2) To what extent is the present manner and custom of ordination in accord with the New Testament teaching and practice?

(1) In the Old Testament the custom has the meaning both of identification (Lev. 1-4), and of impartation (Deut. 34:9). This twofold meaning also occurs in the New Testament. In Acts 13:3 the laying on of hands of the people (officials?) identified the Church with the apostles and their work; while in Acts 8:17 and 19:6 the impartation of the Holy Spirit came through the laying on of hands.

(2) Only in Acts 6:6 do we have any record of what might seem to be an "ordination" by the apostles. The seven men, chosen by the Church, were thus set aside for service by the approval of the apostles. The word "ordained" in Acts 14:23 is translated "appointed" in the Revised Version, and no laying on of hands is mentioned. Timothy received certain gifts by the laying on of Paul's hands (2 Tim. 1:6), and with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (1 Tim. 4:14). In the practice of Christians today the laying on of hands appears to have only the thought of induction into office. It is too often a mere form.

DENOMINATIONS

Why are there so many so-called Christian denominations?

Many of the various denominations arose out of seemingly unavoidable historical situations; such as the Lutherans, Pres-

byterians, and Methodists. Others arose because of divisions over doctrinal differences or forms of worship. All of the evangelical denominations agree upon the doctrines that are vital to salvation. They differ only upon the non-essentials. Moreover, denominations are not wholly evil. Better have denominations which hold deep convictions as to the truth than a colorless unionism that surrenders any of the vital teachings of Christianity.

CHAPTER VII

DEATH

DEATH AS A SLEEP

Why is death likened to a sleep?

Several passages refer to death as a sleep, such as John 11:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:14. This does not mean a complete state of unconsciousness for the soul, but has reference rather to the body only. When Jesus called to Lazarus he heard and came forth from the tomb.

DEATH AS A RIVER

In our hymns we find such expressions as a "dark turbid stream," "a wide river," and "one more river to cross," but is there any such thing in the Bible?

Such expressions are figurative and probably based upon the crossing of the Jordan which separated the Israelites from the promised land.

SOUL AFTER DEATH

(1) Where does the soul go at death? (2) Is the soul conscious after death? (3) Do the wicked suffer eternal punishment, or are they finally annihilated?

(1) The spirits of believers go directly to be with Christ in heaven, and the spirits of the unsaved go to the place of punishment. (2) See the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). This account is not called a parable, but is a statement of facts. (3) Death is never the cessation of being. Even in this life they who are spiritually dead do not cease to exist. They are quite active (Eph. 2:1-3). Likewise the second death, or the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14) does not mean extinction.

A SECOND CHANCE

(1) Does the language of 1 Peter 3:19, 20 afford any foundation for the doctrine of a "second chance" after death? (2) Can you refer me to any pamphlet refuting this doctrine?

(1) There are many interpretations of 1 Peter 3:19, 20, but in none, sound or unsound, is it held that they to whom Christ preached were given a second gospel chance, only their first chance. Even if it were their second chance there is no record that any embraced their opportunity. We are not even certain what message was proclaimed to those "spirits in prison," or that they were the spirits of men. In any case we have no basis in this text for believing that they who, having heard the gospel and rejected it, will be given another chance after death.

(2) *The Future Retribution of the Wicked*, also *Bible Problems Explained*, by Rev. James M. Gray, D. D.; *The Inevitable Alternative*, by Rev. Arthur T. Pierson, D. D.; *Will Hell Be Vacated?* by Rev. Jesse Forrest Silver.

DEATH AND HELL

Do "death" and "hell" mean the same in Revelation 1:18?

The word "hell" should be "hades," which means the place of the dead. Christ is victor over both death and the unseen realm of death.

MEMORY AFTER DEATH

A man is said to have died while undergoing an operation. That is, his heart stopped beating and later resumed beating. When asked if he remembered anything that happened during that interval he said he did not. Where did the man's soul go when his heart stopped beating? Why could he not remember?

Since the interval claimed for this experience is not mentioned we cannot be certain that the man died. Cases have been known in which the heart *seemed* to have stopped beating for hours and yet the person was not dead. Upon the other hand, suppose this man died and was restored to life. Even then he may have been unable to recall what he had seen or heard. We have no record that Lazarus reported his experience of the days he was absent from the body. God has confined our knowledge of the life now going on either in heaven or in hell to His own revelations. Only He knows what should be revealed to us for our present guidance. Nobody ever returned from the dead with authority to tell us anything about these places except Jesus Christ. We state this in the face of the false claims of spiritism.

CHAPTER VIII

DIVINE HEALING

HEALING OF THE BODY

Would the Lord have us employ physicians, or depend upon Him alone?

All healing is of God. The utmost any physician can do is to assist a divinely made body which automatically rebuilds itself so long as the machinery is not defective. In some cases God, even today, heals directly without the use of means or human instrumentality. He could do so always, but in His wisdom and in our frailty there is a ministry in suffering. By waiting upon Him He will reveal His will in the matter. No general rule can be made for all.

Is the bodily healing mentioned in Matthew 8:17 for today, or was it confined to Christ's earthly ministry?

Considerable difference of opinion prevails concerning this matter. The prophecy quoted from Isaiah was indeed literally fulfilled by Christ in His healing ministry. We believe also that His atonement includes the redemption of spirit, soul, and body. The redemption of the body begins now, the moment that the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in it, and will be completed at the time of the resurrection. The present work of the Spirit may result in the immediate and complete healing of the body, as many of God's people have experienced, or it may mean only the continual impartation of divine life to the body, renewing its strength day by day. The method, as to which is most glorifying to God, must be left entirely to Him.

HEALING IN THE ATONEMENT

Is healing of the body in the atonement?

The body is in the atonement, for it is to be changed and "made like unto his own glorious body"; but salvation at the present time does not always include healing. Many saints have suffered to the glory of God. Isaiah 53:5 and Matthew 8:17 are

not to be taken literally for this age. Christ did works of healing while He was here, as prophesied by Isaiah, but He is not miraculously healing all who come to Him now. God is healing some directly, some by the use of means, and others not at all. And this last class may be as holy and exercise as much faith as those who are healed.

There is no necessary healing of the body in the atonement at the present time. Otherwise those who are saved could not sicken and die. But since the atonement provides for the ultimate redemption of the body there is a sense in which there is healing in it.

SICKNESS AND SIN

(1) Is violation of health laws a sin? (2) Is it possible to avoid physical ills by living close to God?

(1) Since we are responsible for the care of our bodies, any known violation of health laws must be regarded as sin. (2) Not entirely, else death might be eliminated, and it is not. But the indwelling Spirit reacts favorably upon the body.

WHO CAUSES SICKNESS?

Who causes sickness to come upon us, God or Satan?

Sickness may come as a direct judgment of God. There is also a close connection between personal sin and sickness. Our own excesses and disregard of the laws of hygiene may induce sickness, or it may result from an epidemic over which we have no control. Job's afflictions were attributed to Satan, but God also may send them. (Deut. 28:60; 2 Chron. 21:18). One may inherit a poor physique which makes one more liable to disease. Yet the general law may be laid down that sickness and death are the direct or indirect results of sin which was introduced into the world by Satan.

CHAPTER IX

ESCHATOLOGY

MEANING OF THE TERM

What is the meaning of eschatology?

Eschatology has come to mean the events connected with the second coming of Christ, such as the rapture of saints, the resurrection of the dead, and the judgment upon living nations. Some would add the establishment of the Kingdom Age. It must include the events which usher in the Kingdom of the Son of Man.

DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES

What is the meaning of the "dispensation of the fulness of times"?

Another translation is the "stewardship of the fulness of the seasons." Some would limit this stewardship to the present age, holding that it has special reference to Christ's headship over the Church. But the phrase evidently stretches forward into the next age. Not only are gospel times, or seasons, meant, but all "the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power," including "the times of the restoration of all things, which God hath spoken by the prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). Not only is the Millennial Age included, but the ages following the millennium (Eph. 2:7). All things, in all times, are to be summed up in Christ.

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST FUNDAMENTAL

Is the second coming of Christ fundamental?

Some teachers of the Bible minimize the doctrine of the second coming of our Lord, even in a so-called Bible conference; but this ought not to disturb us, for such teaching is an unwitting fulfilment of prophecy (2 Pet. 3:3, 4). In our opinion the doctrine of the second coming is fundamental for the following reasons: (1) In order to fulfill and validate the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament. (2) In order to complete the

salvation of those who have believed on Him (Rom. 8:23). (3) In order to restore all things (Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:18-21). (4) In order to bring to an end the present evil order of society and to judge the wicked (2 Thess. 1:7-10). (5) In order to reign in glory and to reward His own (1 Thess. 4:14-17; Rev. 20:6).

UNTIL SHILOH COME

What is the interpretation of Genesis 49:10 in view of the breakdown of Zedekiah?

This passage is Messianic. Some reject the word "Shiloh" as being a proper name, interpreting it as meaning, "Till he come whose it is"; or, more freely, "until he comes, whose is the kingdom." The meaning is that Judah, or his tribe, shall continue unto the coming of the Messiah, who shall then take possession of the Kingdom. The temporary overthrow of Judah in the days of Zedekiah did not destroy the force of the prophecy, for the continuance of the human kingship was conditioned upon obedience to the real king, who was God Himself. The word "until" does not mark the end of Judah's rule, but its consummation in the coming of the Messiah.

THE COMING *FOR* AND *WITH* THE CHURCH

Please distinguish between the coming of Christ *for* His saints and His coming *with* them.

Christ is to descend from heaven, apparently unattended and secretly *for* the saints. At that time the righteous dead of this and preceding ages will be raised in glory and the living saints changed. Together they will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Subsequently Christ will return to the earth *with* His saints. 1 Thess. 4:14 speaks of these who sleep in Jesus as coming with Him, but 3:13 mentions the coming with "all his saints." See also the prophecy in Zechariah 14:5 and Jude 14.

TIME OF THE RETURN

How do you explain the *parousia* in the light of Matthew 16:28 and 24:34?

In the first passage the prophecy of the Son of Man coming in His kingdom had a typical fulfilment in the Transfiguration. See Matthew 17:1-9 and 2 Peter 1:16-18. The actual coming

is still future. Likewise the second passage, which refers to a judgment season, had a typical fulfilment for that generation in the destruction of Jerusalem, but the complete or actual fulfilment awaits Christ's return in person.

While we do not know the day nor the hour of the Lord's return for His Church, it is not impossible that the Jews may know beforehand the exact time of His coming to the earth in final judgment. This would be in keeping with the definiteness of the revelation made to Noah concerning the Flood.

"THIS GENERATION"

What "generation" is referred to in Matthew 24:34?

There are two scholarly interpretations of Matthew 24:34, either of which is sound. The one by Dean Alford is that *genea* here has the meaning of race or family of people (Jer. 8:3; Matt. 23:36, 35; Luke 16:8; 17:25). The meaning is that the generation or race of the Jews would not pass away until all things be fulfilled. The second interpretation is that "this" generation refers to the time of which Jesus is speaking, the generation which shall see the setting up of the abomination of desolations (v. 15), and the time of the budding of the fig tree, which is a type of the revival of the Jewish nation (v. 32).

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN PREMILLENNIALISM AND POSTMILLENNIALISM

Please give a concise statement as to what premillenarians and postmillenarians believe.

In general terms the views of the postmillenarians may be summed up under four heads: (1) Under the present spread of the Gospel the world will gradually improve and become Christianized, after which Christ will return. (2) Christ's kingdom is spiritual and is now in process of being established (Matt. 13:31-33). Christ is now reigning, and increasingly so, as seen in better laws, improved conditions in society, and a more Christian feeling among the nations (John 18:19; Rom. 14:17). (3) Concerning the resurrection some think it is spiritual; but if bodily and future, then it is a "general resurrection" occurring at one time (John 5:28). (4) Concerning the judgment, they teach that there is to be one general judgment of the living and the dead (Acts 17:31).

The position of premillenarians is the opposite: (1) The visible kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ awaits the return of Christ in glory (Luke 1:32-33; Matt. 24:29, 30; Matt. 25:31-34; Acts 15:15-17). (2) The present age is a mixture of good and evil, wheat and tares, which condition will prevail until Christ comes (Matt. 13:38-43). (3) This age, while the triumphs of the Gospel will be great, includes also an apostasy of the professing Church (2 Tim. 3:1-8; 2 Pet. 3:3-7; 2 Thess. 2:3; Rev. 3:14-22). (4) There will be a first and a second resurrection between which will come the Millennial Kingdom. (Rev. 20:2-6; John 5:28, 29; Dan. 12:2-3). (5) In connection with the first resurrection is the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52). (6) A judgment of the wicked who are living will precede the millennium, and a judgment of the wicked dead will follow (Matt. 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:11-15).

OBJECTIONS TO PREMILLENNIALISM

(1) Premillenarians are expecting Christ to do what He wants His Spirit-filled people to do. (2) They reduce the conception of the kingdom to a low earthly plane, while Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world." (3) The Jews can be saved only by a moral act. They must repent and come by way of the Cross, rather than by a special manifestation of Christ in power.

(1) The present work of God's people truly is to preach the gospel and save as many as possible; but such work will not establish the millennium and never was intended to do so. The millennium will be established through judgments upon the world after the Church has been removed (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; 2 Thess. 1:7-10).

(2) The Kingdom will be upon this earth, but not upon a low plane. It will be a kingdom of universal righteousness and peace and glory. Christ did not say to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world, but that it was not "now" from hence (John 18:36, last clause).

(3) We agree that there is only one way of salvation for either Jew or Gentile. When Christ returns and Israel receives Him as their Saviour and Messiah, "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26, 27). They shall be willing "in the day of thy

power" (Ps. 110:3). But the millennium means more to Israel than mere salvation. It means the establishment of the Kingdom, and this is God's work (Dan. 2:44, 45).

THE MILLENNIUM AND 2 PETER 3:10

Do the events prophesied in 2 Peter 3:10 render the millennial reign of Christ impossible? How can He reign over the earth if it already has been destroyed?

In the first place, the earth may not be destroyed in the sense of being annihilated. The world in the days of Noah "perished"; but did that water-covered earth cease to exist? Likewise in the coming judgment by fire the earth will be purged, renovated and renewed, but not annihilated.

This judgment occurs in "the day of the Lord," which is not a day of twenty-four hours, but a prolonged period, at least a thousand years. This coming "day" will be introduced by judgment upon the wicked, and will then be ruled over by Christ in strict righteousness. This reign will be interspersed with judgments. It will be a period of unparalleled peace and prosperity, but it will *close* with the judgments mentioned by Peter, after which will come the new heaven and the new earth.

WORK OF THE ANTICHRIST

Please explain Daniel 7:25, Revelation 13, and Revelation 19:20.

Daniel 7:25 describes the blasphemy of the Antichrist, his persecution of the saints for a limited period, and his own disregard of law. Revelation 13 is a further portrayal of the career of the Antichrist, together with his associate, the false prophet. Revelation 19:20 records their final doom.

THE NEXT ANTICHRIST

Will Judas Iscariot be the next Antichrist?

Although it is said that Satan had entered into Judas, who in one place is called the "Son of perdition," these facts are not, in our judgment, sufficient proof that Judas will be the coming Antichrist. Some are coming to look upon Mussolini as the possible Antichrist, but it is too soon to make such an affirmation. We must await developments. Some are of the opinion that the Antichrist must be a Jew. This may be. We have never seen anything in print to indicate that Mussolini belongs to that race.

THE TWO BEASTS

Who is the dread character in the Revelation called "the beast"? Is he Satan?

In Revelation, the thirteenth chapter, two "beasts" are mentioned. The first is the chief one. He is a world-ruler, but is not Satan, for it is Satan who gives him his power and great authority (vv. 2, 4). The other "beast" is in league with the first. But you need not fear either of these "beasts," if you are a true follower of Jesus Christ. All such will probably be removed from the earth before the awful sway of these "beasts" comes.

COMING OF ELIJAH

Has Elijah yet come?

The coming of Elijah was prophesied by the prophet Malachi. Christ's disciples understood that Elijah would precede the coming of their Messiah (Mark 9:11). Christ corroborated their belief, "Elijah indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things" (v. 12). Then He said, "Elijah is come" (v. 13). The reference here is plainly to John the Baptist. This fact is more clearly stated in Matthew 11:14. Christ here refers to the coming of John the Baptist as the coming of Elijah, yet he speaks of Elijah as yet to come, "This is Elijah, that is to come." This is the key-verse. John the Baptist came "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17), but he was not Elijah (John 1:21). He was a partial fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi, but more accurately the fulfilment of Isaiah 40:3 (cf. John 1:23). Elijah is yet to come. His coming is to be in connection with "the great and terrible day of Jehovah" (Mal. 4:5).

THE TWO WITNESSES

Who are the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3?

All so-called "historical" interpretations must be rejected because the language of verses 8-11 has been fulfilled by none of them. The prevailing view of the Early Church was that they were Enoch and Elijah, the two prophets who left the earth without dying. As to Elijah, the identification is probably correct. John the Baptist was a fulfilment of Malachi 4:5, but evidently not the full or final one (Matt. 17:11, 12). But the internal evidence of Scripture seems stronger for Moses than for

Enoch. The work attributed to these two prophets is similar to that already done by Moses and Elijah. Besides, their names have already been coupled in prophecy and history: Malachi 4:4, 5, and at the Transfiguration.

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Do you believe the Scriptures teach the resurrection of the dead? Do you believe that the dead really live in some such way as spiritists teach?

We believe in the resurrection of the body. We believe that Christ's body was raised and glorified, and that our bodies shall be made like unto His (Phil. 3:21). We are not spiritists, but we believe in the conscious existence of the "ego" after death. We reject the doctrine of "soul-sleeping." When Paul longed to depart in order to be present with the Lord (Phil. 1:22), he anticipated a conscious fellowship and enjoyment which was "far better" than anything he had known here.

FIRST RESURRECTION SAINTS

What kind of bodies did the saints possess who arose in Jerusalem after the resurrection of our Lord (Matt. 27:51-53)?

Two interpretations prevail: One that these bodies were truly resurrected, and not merely resuscitated; the other view is just the opposite. Since Christ is the "first fruits," all other resurrections must follow His (I. Cor. 15:20-23). In either case the raised saints probably accompanied Christ to heaven as trophies of His own victory over death.

THE RAPTURE

(1) Is not the teaching that careless Christians will not share in the Rapture a great incentive to holiness?

If careless Christians cannot be aroused by love for the person of Christ it is not probable that the incentive you mention will have any effect upon them, for they probably do not believe in His appearing.

(1) On what Scripture is belief in the Rapture based? (2) Give Scripture for the belief that the Church will not go through the Tribulation.

(1) Only one clear passage (1 Thess. 4:14-18), but inferred also from the passages in answer to the second question. (2) Luke 21:36; 1 Thess. 1:10; 3:13; 4:17; 5:1-4, 9; Rev. 3:10; 4:4; 5:8-10.

MISSING THE RAPTURE

Are there two classes of saved people? At the time of the Rapture will one class be left behind to go through the Tribulation?

There are two classes of saved people, the spiritual and the carnal; the mature in Christ and the babes in Christ; those who are watching and zealously serving, and those who are worldly and indifferent. In our judgment all who are members of Christ's body will share in the Rapture. Certain professing Christians will be left behind and pass through the Tribulation, but not any who really belong to Christ.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Does the "law of double reference" teach that the "Great Tribulation" is to come upon the whole world before Christ comes?

If we consider the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. as a type of the Great Tribulation, the law of double reference may apply here. The former was local, whereas the latter will be world-wide (Luke 21:35, 36.)

The Great Tribulation is still future, and people will be saved during it. All true Christians probably will be removed from the earth before the Great Tribulation. The Tribulation is described in the Revelation, chapters four to nineteen. It covers only the last three and one half years of that period. The Tribulation may be preceded by great revivals.

When and for whom is the time of trouble (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21)?

The time of trouble mentioned in Daniel 12:1 is the same as the unparalleled tribulation of Matthew 24:21. It is not for Christians, however, but for Daniel's people, the Jews, and is followed immediately by the appearing of Christ in judgment (Matt. 24:29-30).

TRIBULATION SAINTS

Will the saints of God, or Christians, be on the earth during the three and one-half years of the Great Tribulation, or will they have been taken to be with Christ?

"Saints of God" may refer either to the Old or the New Testament saints. Some of the Jewish saints will certainly be upon earth at that time, and also the Gentile saints who will be saved during that period. There will be a company on the earth known as the "tribulation saints." But as to Christians, it is our opinion that the true Church will then be with Christ.

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Does Matthew 24:15-20 refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70?

The destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 was predicted in Luke 21:20-24, and was followed by the world-wide dispersion of the Jews. That referred to in Matthew 24 is still future, as indicated by the context.

THE SEVEN SEALS

Please explain the seven seals in Revelation 5 and 6.

It is thought by many Bible students that this seven-sealed book symbolizes "the title deeds of man's inheritance," and that the opening of the seals are the successive preliminary steps by which Christ will take the earthly kingdom and give it to those to whom it belongs. The white horse and its rider symbolize conquest and victory. The red horse and rider symbolize universal war and bloodshed. The third horse and rider symbolize famine. The fourth horse and rider symbolize pestilence and death. The opening of the fifth seal gives a glimpse into heaven, where the martyrs who have lost their lives under the first four seals are seen and heard praying. They also are comforted. The sixth seal pictures the portents which are to immediately precede the coming of the Day of the Lord, and corresponds to Matthew 24:29, 30. The seventh seal depicts the closing events of the end of this age. It is parallel with the seventh trumpet and the seventh vial.

"TIMES" AND "FULNESS" OF THE GENTILES

(1) When did the "times of the Gentiles" begin (Luke 21:24)? (2) When did the "fulness of the Gentiles" come in (Romans 11:25)?

(1) The expression covers the period when the rulership of the world is in the hands of the Gentiles. This began with the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. (2) This event is still future and refers to the completion of the Church and the end of the Church Age.

PENTECOST AND THE PROPHECY OF JOEL

In what sense was the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-21 the fulfilment of prophecy in Joel?

According to Peter, the phenomena of the gift of tongues and the prophesying or preaching in connection therewith, were in accordance with the prophecy of Joel (2:28-32). But Pentecost was not a complete fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. It is evident that verses nineteen and twenty of Acts 2 have not yet been fulfilled, and a study of the passage in Joel reveals that the complete fulfilment of his prophecy belongs to the time when the Jews shall have been restored to their own land and are again in covenant blessing with Jehovah (Joel 2:21-28; 3:1).

LAST TRUMP

Is there a relation between the "last trump" of 1 Corinthians 15:52 and the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11?

Some Bible students make them identical, but in our judgment they are not the same. In 1 Corinthians 15:52, the trumpet is to summon the dead saints and to change the living. It is called "the trump of God" in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and has nothing to do with wicked men. In Revelation 11 all the trumpets bring judgments upon the world for its wickedness. The seventh is "last" in the series and introduces the kingdom of the Son of man upon the earth, while the trump in Corinthians and Thessalonians calls God's people away from this earth.

DAY OF THE LORD

Will you please give me some light upon the "Day of the Lord"? Is the Lord present in person?

The phrase the "Day of the Lord" frequently occurs in the Old Testament and occasionally in the New Testament. It is an indefinite phrase and its events are variously described. Some would limit the "day" to the short judgment period that occurs in connection with the return of our Lord, but the more correct view, in our judgment, extends the period so as to include the

millennium as well as the Great Tribulation which introduces it. Christ will be here in person and reign in glory over the whole earth. The Church will share in the glories of His reign, as also will His ancient people Israel.

What does Amos 5:18 mean? Is the "Day of the Lord" darkness instead of light? Why should we not desire the "Day of the Lord"?

Whether we should desire the Day of the Lord depends upon whether or not we are pleasing unto the Lord. In the case of the Israelites, whom Amos was addressing, to desire the Day of the Lord was to desire their own destruction. Their transgressions were manifold and their sins mighty (5:12). Therefore, they should think of God as the one who "maketh the day dark with night" (v. 8). The Day of the Lord is in reality a day of light and unparalleled glory and blessing both for Israel and the world, but it is to be ushered in with darkness and gloom and devastating judgments upon the wicked, a day of terror. Woe unto all such who desire the Day of the Lord. But that day will not affect the true Christian. We do not long for the Day of the Lord, but for our Lord Himself, whom we shall meet in the air prior to His descent in judgment to the earth (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

What is the meaning of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-9?

Read the passage in the Revised Version. In verse 2 the expression is "the Day of the Lord," which so often is alluded to and described in the Old Testament as introduced by judgments and terror. In 1 Thessalonians Paul had said that the Day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night, and as a day of wrath so far as the world is concerned, but it would not take instructed Christians by surprise (1 Thess. 4:2-4, 9). But false teachers were disturbing the local church by teaching that this Day of the Lord was at hand, even *now present* (2 Thess. 2:2, mar.). The apostle calms their fears by telling them that before that day comes there will be an apostasy, the revealing of the Antichrist, and the removal of a restraining influence which was preventing the revealing of the Man of Sin and also checking the spread of lawlessness. We ought not to confuse the fact of the coming of Christ and our gathering to Him with the coming of the Day of the Lord. The one truth is a message of comfort for the

Christian (1 Thess. 4:18), while the other is a warning for the unbeliever. First, the Lord descends into the air *for* His saints, who at that time are gathered *to* Him (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Later He descends to the earth "*with* all His saints" (1 Thess. 3:13), at which time He will judge Antichrist and His followers, and set up the kingdom of the Son of man. We do not know when Christ will come *for* His Church, but certain events are to intervene before the coming of the Day of the Lord, such as indicated in these verses.

HASTENING THE DAY

Can human effort hasten the millennium?

There is a sense in which it can. While God has a definite program it seems in some measure to be contingent upon human co-operation. For example, Jesus Christ made this statement: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." Does not this make the time of the closing up of the affairs of the present age depend, to some extent, upon our efforts? Again, the Apostle Peter writes, "Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (R. V. margin). So we conclude that the beginning of the day of wrath which shall end the Church Age and introduce the Kingdom Age is not immutably fixed by God, but in some measure hinges upon human co-operation.

LONGEVITY DURING THE MILLENNIUM

Is there Scripture proof of sin and death during the millennium?

While life will be wonderfully prolonged for the righteous, sinners are to be punished by death (Isa. 65:20). Yet even a sinner will be considered a child when a century old.

THE TEN KINGDOMS

Will you please give me the names of the ten kingdoms into which the old Roman Empire was divided?

We know of no such division. For a brief period there was a threefold division, when the Empire was divided among the three sons of Constantine, in 337; later, in 364, it was divided into two parts, when Valentinian I placed his brother Valens in power in the East, while he retained control over the West.

The tenfold division of the Roman Empire belongs to the future, the latter time of this world power (Dan. 7:23-27; Rev. 17:12-14).

THE 144,000

(1) Will the 144,000 of Revelation 7 be taken away before or after the Jews as a nation are assembled in Palestine? (2) Has the word "virgins" in connection with the 144,000 (Rev. 14:4) any reference to sex? If not, what does the word mean?

(1) They will not be "taken away" at all, since they are Jews chosen out of the twelve tribes of Israel. (2) No reference to sex, as the first part of the verse shows. The word symbolizes purity or chastity, with special reference to idolatrous practices. These tested ones will be blameless in lip and in life (v. 5).

THE UNKNOWN TIME

How does Christ's lack of knowledge (Matt. 24:36) affect the matter of His omniscience?

If we concede that Christ was God, we must concede His omniscience. He ceased in no respect to be God when He took the nature of man. This does not mean that He always exercised all of the attributes of God. He voluntarily limited that full exercise upon several occasions. Could He not also have limited His own knowledge upon this one matter? Another interpretation may appeal to some: It has been suggested that Jesus revealed only what was specially given to Him of the Father to reveal (John 3:2; 8:26; 12:49) and that the time of His coming was not a matter upon which He had been instructed to speak, hence in a modified sense He did not know it.

LOOSING OF SATAN

Why is Satan loosed at the end of the Millennium to test the nations? (2) Will those persons who deny the Virgin Birth be held accountable to God?

(1) Apparently the nations have been doing fairly well during that period of unparalleled blessing and prosperity, but like those who lived in all preceding ages only the testing of Satan will reveal what they really are at heart. They, too, will

have to choose between Christ and Satan. (2) It seems to us in the light of the clear teaching of Scripture upon this subject, which is accessible also to them, they must be held accountable for denying the fact and thus sinning against the light.

BURNING THE TARES

What is the meaning of "binding and burning the tares" (Matt. 13:30)?

This is to occur at the end of the present Age (v. 40). The "tares" are the children of the evil one (v. 38), that is, of the Devil (v. 39). At the consummation of the age, when the Son of Man shall return and send forth the angels to execute judgment, taking out of His kingdom all things that offend (v. 41), then wicked men will be destroyed, as in the time of the Flood. The element of destruction, however, will be fire instead of water.

CHAPTER X

GOD

BEHOLDING GOD'S FACE

Will you please harmonize the apparent contradiction between verses 11 and 20 in Exodus 33?

In verse 11 the second person of the Godhead is referred to. Just how He was manifested to Moses is not stated; possibly as an angel, as to Abraham (Gen. 18:2, 16, 17). Thus God spake to Moses "face to face," that is, personally and directly in the manifested form. This is not incompatible with the statements in verses 20 and 23, for it is not possible for man in his present condition to behold the unveiled effulgence and glory of God and live.

THE CHANGING AND THE CHANGELESS GOD

Will you kindly harmonize Numbers 14:34 with Malachi 3:6 and James 1:17?

The phrase in Numbers, "and ye shall know my breach of promise" is, rather, "my change of purpose." Included within God's all-embracing and unchanging purposes of ultimate blessing for Israel were minor purposes and promises which were contingent upon the obedience of the people. The case in hand is such an instance. But when we read in Isaiah and in James of the changelessness of God, the reference is to His Being or character.

AN EVIL SPIRIT FROM THE LORD

Does God send evil spirits to disturb people's minds and tempers?

Only in the sense that He permits them to take possession of the bodies of men. But in the present instances, (1 Sam. 16:23; Judges 9:23) what occurred probably had better be explained by natural causes. King Saul may have been demon-possessed, or his fits of distemper may have been caused by the conscious-

ness of his past sins and mistakes, which brought upon him the loss of his kingdom. The disorders of mind were providentially permitted; it was not that God miraculously sent them.

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

Does 2 Timothy 2:13 mean that all unbelievers will finally be reconciled to God, since He "abideth faithful"?

Although God continues faithful, this is no comfort for those who continue in unbelief, for that is proof that they never have been re-born. God's faithfulness is a comfort to true believers, but the very opposite to unbelievers, even though they may once have professed the name of Jesus Christ.

INCONSISTENT IDEA ABOUT GOD

Are not the conceptions of God in the Old Testament inconsistent with those in the New?

The conceptions of God in the Old and New Testaments are not inconsistent when rightly understood. In the Old Testament illustration of God's severity—ordering the man who had gathered sticks upon the Sabbath to be stoned to death—we must remember that the law had been given only recently. The man was wholly without excuse. It was needful that an example be made of him at once, else the sanctity of the Sabbath would not be appreciated by the people, and all the good it was intended to bring to them would soon be forfeited. Seeming harshness is not incompatible with love. Strict enforcement of law does not alter the loving character of God. The God of the Old Testament is the same as of the New. Even in the New Testament we are warned that "our God is a consuming fire."

GOODNESS OF GOD

How can God, as revealed in the Old Testament, be regarded as good when He commanded the massacre of the Canaanites?

One reason why this objection to God's goodness is raised by unbelievers is because of their ignorance of the situation, and also because they do not see sin as God sees it. In the first place, the moral condition of the Canaanites was so rotten that it was hopeless. See Leviticus 18:25-27. God had shown His goodness and forbearance to them since the days of Abraham. Upon the other hand, God showed His goodness to Israel by

commanding the extermination of the former inhabitants lest their abominations corrupt the Chosen People.

EXTENT OF GOD'S LOVE

(1) Does God love the whole world, or only those who believe on Christ? (2) In what sense did He love Jacob and hate Esau?

(1) Although God in Christ loves the Church in a special way (Eph. 5:25-27) His love embraces all mankind (John 3:16). (2) Not in the sense of bitterness or anger, but only in the sense that He chose to hand down the birthright in the line of Jacob. The question of personal salvation is not involved here, but only the matter of precedence and blessing.

GOD'S SOVEREIGN MERCY

If God bestows mercy upon whom He will, and hardens whom He will, how is man responsible for his salvation (Romans 9:18-23)?

The "therefore" of verse 18 connects it with the hardening of the heart of Pharaoh (v. 17). In Exodus we read that "God hardened Pharaoh's heart," and also that "Pharaoh hardened his heart." An examination of the context reveals that in each specific instance Pharaoh acted wholly as a free agent. By his choice to go contrary to the revealed will of God he hardened his heart more and more each time he chose to do his own will instead of God's will. This divine law is continually operating. But it is also a spiritual law that "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." This is the law of salvation. "Whosoever will," therefore, may enter into the experience of God's mercy. We are indeed "clay," but God never arbitrarily employs His sovereignty either to show His mercy or to harden. Our own acts determine God's dealing with us. He "endures with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction" (v. 22). The vessels of mercy who are prepared unto glory (v. 23) are those who have responded to His love and come to Him.

HOW GOD TEMPTS US

How do you harmonize Genesis 22:1 with James 1:13?

"God did tempt Abraham." This does not mean that God enticed Abraham to sin, but has the meaning of testing or

proving. When James says "neither tempteth he any man," he means, as the context shows, that as God cannot be enticed by evil, so likewise He never entices any man to do evil.

GOD AND IMMORTALITY

(1) Does any one besides God possess immortality (1 Tim. 6:16)? (2) What book would you recommend?

As to essence, only of God is it true that He alone has immortality. Immortality, as possessed by angels or men, is derived from God. God has life in Himself and the Son has life in Himself. Christ gives this life to whom He will (John 5:21-24). This does not mean that non-Christians cease to exist at death; nor does this teach that any souls will ever be annihilated. All men will always have mere existence, but only those who experience the life of God in Christ partake of His immortality. (2) *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, by Salmond, and *Problem of Immortality*, by E. Petavel, are books presenting opposite views on this subject, we are told.

HAND OF GOD

(1) Is it true that the hand of God is seen in every event of our lives? (2) How are we to know what things come to us directly from God and what comes from God through Satan? (3) Are there occurrences in our daily lives for which God is not accountable?

(1) That "our times are in His hands" is quite true. Actively or permissibly all things that happen to us are of God's ordering. But not always are we able to *see* this. Frequently God's hand in our affairs is not discernible for many years after the events have transpired. (2) This is often difficult. Peter was sifted by Satan as wheat. But God so overruled it that the chaff was blown away and only the wheat remained. In order to discern the voice or work of God we must walk very humbly before Him and in closest fellowship. (3) God is not always accountable. Not in the sense of being responsible for what happens to us. We are creatures of free choice and can allow things to come into our lives that God would wish had been kept out; and sometimes sickness and death and troubles of various kinds come into our lives, which we are powerless to prevent.

REPENTANCE OF GOD

Please explain Exodus 32:14. In what sense does God repent?

When a person changes his mind, especially as to an evil course, he is said to repent. This language may be applied to God in order to indicate to us a line of action different from what was proposed or apparent. But, since God knows beforehand all the circumstances and eventualities of every situation, it is impossible for Him to be mistaken either as to His purpose or His acts; hence, in reality, God never does anything that afterwards calls for repentance. In the present instance, the purpose to destroy the Israelites was merely provisional. He knew beforehand that He would heed the prayer of Moses and not carry His proposal into effect. Nevertheless, He made the proposition to Moses as a test of Moses, but knowing also that the considerations presented by Moses (vv. 11-13) would make it impossible for Him to execute His threat of extermination.

EARTHQUAKES AND AN OVERRULING PROVIDENCE

How can we reconcile destructive earthquakes with God's overruling providence?

This is God's world and even the forces of nature are not beyond His control. As to the first question all men know that they are continually exposed to the sudden and overwhelming destruction of natural forces, such as storm, or wind, or wave, or earthquake. These frequently may be escaped by wise planning. Sometimes men "tempt Providence," as in the case of the Japanese. The cities experiencing the recent catastrophe will doubtless rebuild, although they know they are in a deadly volcanic region. Should God be held responsible for the loss of life under such conditions? But it should not be forgotten that God can deliver His own even in the midst of the destructive forces of nature. We have only to call to mind the experiences of Noah, of the Israelites, of Paul, of Jonah. In connection with the Flood and with the Egyptian plagues it should be borne in mind that God frequently has made use of the forces of nature to accomplish His wrath against sinners, and will do so again. While considering God's gracious providence we

should not forget His awful justice. But in the case of God's own people, who sometimes perish by reason of these catastrophies, has His providential care over them failed? Not so. God never has promised security or permanency of life here. Death to the body may come at any moment, as God wills; but death in no way interferes with God's care over His own. It is merely a transition to a happier sphere.

GOD, MAN, SATAN

(1) How and when did God originate? Who or what is God? If God is spirit, does He fill all space?

(2) Why did God create man whom He knew would sin and then be condemned to hell? Can the saved be happy in heaven if aware that friends are suffering in hell? How were people saved under the dispensation of law? Did they know anything about the future life?

(3) Why was the world given over into the hands of Satan? Why did God permit Satan to tempt man? If God is stronger than Satan why does He permit him to continue his evil career?

(1) God never had a beginning, for He was eternally self-existent. God is spirit, definable only by His revealed attributes. He is also the creator and moral ruler of His universe. His throne is in the heavens, but He is omnipresent. This does not necessarily mean that He fills all space, but that His presence and power are universal.

(2) While it is true that God knew before He created man that man would sin, there was no necessity for man to sin. Man, created in the image of God, was a free moral agent and could choose either good or evil. Only such a creature possesses the possibility of the highest attainment. The power to choose involves the possibility of choosing evil but not the necessity. Even angels have sinned.

The saved who are in heaven can be happy because they view suffering from God's point of view. We can correctly understand God's love only as we understand His holiness. People were saved under the dispensation of law just as now, through faith (Rom. 4:3). The sacrifices were typical of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. The knowledge of the future life possessed by Old Testament saints was limited, but not utterly lacking (2 Sam. 12:23).

(3) God has not turned over this world to Satan. Satan is a usurper. His days are numbered. But for some inscrutable reason God has permitted him to continue to work evil to a limited degree. For some reason it has seemed wise to God to permit mankind to be tested, tempted, and sifted by Satan. God is indeed stronger than Satan and could end his career at any moment, but He will not do so until His own purposes are accomplished. Then Satan will meet his doom. See Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20.

GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

(1) Is God the author of our thoughts? (2) Does God possess all power? (3) Is God responsible for the evil in the world? (4) If God is omnipotent is He not responsible for every act of man? (5) If Jesus has all power, does man, or the Devil have any? (6) If any go to hell is it because God wants them to go there?

(1) While God may suggest things to our minds, He is not the author of all our thoughts, for if so, He would be the author of sin. (2) God is omnipotent, i. e., He is all-powerful. (3) Not responsible. See James 1:13-17. (4) In His omnipotence God made man a free moral agent, hence man is responsible for his own acts. (5) Man and the Devil have power only as delegated or permitted by God. (6) God is longsuffering, not wishing "that any should perish" (2 Pet. 3:9).

THE TRINITY

(1) Is the doctrine of the Trinity based upon unity of purpose? (2) Harmonize 1 Corinthians 15:28 with it.

(1) The three persons in the Godhead are not one simply because they work in harmony, but because they are one in essence. (2) 1 Corinthians 15:28 does not teach the subordination of Christ as a member of the Godhead, but in respect to His work as the Redeemer.

(1) Have you any tract dealing with the doctrine of the Trinity? (2) How could Isaiah speak of Christ as the "Everlasting Father"? (3) How can the heathen, who believes in many gods, be taught that there is only one God, while still insisting that He is three persons? (4) Is the triune God three simply in manifestation, and that only in successive stages?

(1) We would refer you to any good treatise upon theology. *The Divine Mystery*, by J. Reader, is a small, but helpful book. See also Dr. Gray's article entitled "Three Persons But One God" in the *Moody Monthly*, September, 1924. (2) In the same sense perhaps as when Christ said, "I and my Father are one," and "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." But it may be best to take the literal translation, the "Father of Eternity." (3) Nobody can make clear the doctrine of the Trinity, for nobody can fully understand the mystery of the Godhead. It is clearly taught in the Bible, however, and therefore we believe it. Neither do we fully understand the mysteries of nature, but we believe them. (4) No, this was one of the heresies taught early in the Church, but it degrades the Son and Holy Spirit. They, too, possess eternity and are equal to the Father in all respects. They are of the "same essence."

IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD

(1) In what sense was man created in the "image" and "likeness" of God? (2) In what sense was Christ "in the form of God"?

(1) Interpreters of these words in Genesis 1:26, 27 are not wholly in agreement with one another. But the meaning of "image" seems to be the reproduction of the spiritual form or substance of God. The word describes the original human species, a species of a higher nature than any of the animal species. Man is created in the image of his Maker. The word "likeness" seems to refer more particularly to outward appearance or resemblance, which may become more or less like the original. But apparently neither word has reference to the physical. (2) The Greek word for "form" in Philippians 2:6, signifies "reality along with appearance." That is, Christ was really God. He possesses full equality. When He took the "form of a servant" (v. 7) He did not cease to be God, but added human nature to the divine and became the God-man.

CHAPTER XI

HEAVEN

PREPARING HEAVEN

How is Christ preparing a place for us (John 14:2)? Is it a work He is carrying on now?

We find it difficult to think of heaven as a place needing any improvement. So probably there is no sense of completion or of finishing suggested by this promise of Jesus. The thought of Jesus as the Bridegroom fits in here, and that He will return for us when all conditions are fully ripe for our gathering unto Him. Heaven is real, and the mansions and all things will be in readiness whenever He calls us to be with Him.

TWO CLASSES OF CHRISTIANS

Are there two classes of Christians in the world? If so, will both classes be admitted to heaven?

Whether there be two, or many classes of Christians, all true Christians will surely be admitted to heaven. We are not to be admitted to heaven because we are faultless, but because of the perfect atonement of Christ, and because of His power to save and to keep all who really believe on Him. Those described in 2 Timothy 3 are not, as you suggest, Christians at all, for they are "corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith" (v. 8). Many doubtless will be saved who have wasted their lives, having built only of wood, hay, stubble. Their works will be burned, but they themselves will be saved because they are built upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:13).

THE HEAVENLY LIFE

Is the heavenly life natural or supernatural?

The supernatural is God's unusual way of doing things. While heaven and the life there would seem supernatural to us who possess physical bodies, and to whom its life and scenes are unfamiliar, no doubt it is natural to those who have always lived there. And probably it will come to be natural to us after we become accustomed to the wonderment of it all.

RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN

Have we any Scripture proof that we shall recognize our loved ones in heaven?

While we have no positive Scripture proof the alternative is unthinkable. What would "mansions" suggest if not fellowship with friends? Paul's great desire was to depart and be "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:9, R. V.). What would a city or a home be like if the inhabitants did not know each other? How could heaven be a place of bliss, if every person met were a stranger? When the heavens were opened to Stephen he saw and recognized Jesus (Acts 7:56). If Jesus was recognizable in His glorified body, shall not also they be recognizable whose bodies shall be made like unto His own glorious body (Phil. 3:21)? Send for the pamphlet *Shall the Saints Know Each Other?* (5 cents), by James M. Gray, Bible Institute Colportage Association, 826 N. La Salle St., Chicago.

FAITH NEEDED IN HEAVEN

Will faith be needed in heaven?

There will never be a place in God's universe where faith will not be needed. It is the basis of all harmonious, loving, abiding relationships between moral beings. Heaven will be the supreme sphere for the exercise of faith. There will be no doubters or unbelievers in heaven.

RICHES AS BARRIERS TO HEAVEN

Will the possession of riches bar one from heaven?

Riches may be a hindrance to becoming saved, but do not necessarily prevent. Furthermore, after having been saved, riches may hinder spiritual growth and cause the Christian to lose his reward. But it is not the amount of wealth that enters into this consideration so much as one's use of what he has, be it little or much.

CHAPTER XII

JESUS CHRIST

CHRIST AS WISDOM

(1) Is it Christ who is spoken of as Wisdom in Proverbs the eighth chapter? (2) If so, does Christ have a beginning? See verses 22, 26.

(1) Since the use of the word in this chapter is not as an attribute, but as a person, it usually has been considered as referring to Christ. It is more than a mere personification. (2) Since Wisdom (Christ) was in existence before creation, He could not have been a part of creation. And since He was "from everlasting" He possesses eternity. Verse twenty-four declares that He was "brought forth." This "beginning" cannot have reference to a point in time, but to the beginning "that is without a beginning." Christ is the eternally begotten Son. As such, He was the Word who was "in the beginning with God," as John tells us. God's fatherhood and Christ's sonship are both eternal.

CHRIST THE BEGINNING OF CREATION

Was not Christ a created being (Rev. 3:14; Col. 1:15-17)?

Either Christ was uncreated, or else He was a mere creature. If He was a created being, then He is not God, He does not possess true Deity, He was not in the beginning with God, and He is not the eternal Son of God; which are the truths asserted in John 1:1, 2. Turning now to Colossians 1:15-17 we find Christ described as "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." This latter phrase would seem to make Christ a creature; but "begotten before every creature" more accurately gives the meaning. He was not the beginning of creation in the sense that He was the first created being, but in the sense that He is the source and cause of creation (John 1:1-4).

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Is there not a contradiction between John 8:12 and Matthew 5:14?

Christ is indeed the Light of the world. He is the source of all light—physical, intellectual, spiritual. Physical, because He is the Creator; intellectual, because He is the Truth, and in Him are “hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”; spiritual, for His life is “the light of men.” But it also is true that His followers “shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life.” Hence they, too, are “the light of the world.” The light in them is not original, as in Christ, but is derived from Him. Nevertheless, during His absence they are the light bearers to the world that “sits in the darkness and shadow of death.”

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

(1) Is not the phrase, “having no form nor comeliness, nor beauty that he should be desired,” contradictory to our conception of Christ? (2) In Genesis 3:15 where is the prophecy of Christ?

(1) Not the Messiah they were looking for—a royal, kingly Messiah—but one of lowly birth and only a carpenter, also the crucified One. (2) “Seed of the woman” suggesting the virgin birth.

CHRIST THE FULFILLER

In what sense did Christ not destroy, but fulfill, the law and the prophets (Matt. 5:17-19)?

Christ came not to lessen the restraint, to overthrow the teachings, or to abrogate the authority of the Old Testament, but to amplify and intensify its teachings, as shown in the verses which follow, and also to keep it as our Divine substitute. The law is still in force, but is not a burden to us who are found in Christ, having experienced God’s grace, and who fulfill the law of love.

THE HEAVENLY TEACHER

Please harmonize 2 Kings 2:1-11; John 3:13, and Acts 2:34.

As to David not having ascended to heaven, the reference is to his body; but in the case of Elijah the account concerns his bodily removal. The harmony must be sought in a correct understanding of John 3:13. Nicodemus was being rebuked for not understanding the spiritual truth to which Jesus was a witness (vv. 10-12). Yet Jesus was the only one qualified to teach

concerning these heavenly things. While Elijah had ascended to heaven, even he did not return to teach heavenly truths. Neither Elijah nor anybody else had that experience. Christ utters a paradox, if we may take all of the words of verse 13 to be His words; for sometimes it is difficult to decide where Jesus leaves off speaking and where John begins. But accepting the whole of verse 13 as the words of Christ, the meaning seems to be that He is the only Heaven-man, being by nature both of heaven and earth, and hence the only one who can speak with authority about both heavenly and earthly things. But it should be observed that neither Elijah nor Enoch had power in themselves to ascend into heaven. They were *taken up*. It seems more probable, however, that verse 13 contains John's words, and that when he wrote them the Son of God had ascended into heaven from whence He had come.

CHRIST THE ROCK

Is Christ Himself the Rock of Matthew 16:18, or is Peter's confession the rock?

Your interpretation of Matthew 16:18 is quite satisfactory. Christ Himself is the Rock upon which the Church is being built. But the particular thing emphasized in this text is the Deity of Christ, or Christ as the unique Son of God. This confession of Peter differentiates Christ from all other beings, and it is this confession of faith in Himself that Christ here specifically indorsed.

CHRIST'S SONSHIP AND ADAM'S

What is the difference between Christ, the only begotten Son, and Adam, the son of God?

Christ is Son of God by Eternal relationship and by possession of the same substance as the Father. Adam was son of God by a creative act.

GENEALOGY OF JESUS

The fact that Jesus was the *legal* son of Joseph would have made him the son of David. But Luke 1:32, and 2:4 also, when properly understood, shows him to be the son of David through Mary, even if there were no further evidence. But further evidence is furnished in the circumstance that the genealogical record in Luke is almost unquestionably that of Mary from David

through Nathan, as the record in Matthew is that of Joseph from David through Solomon. The fact that Matthew makes Jacob the father of Joseph, and Luke makes Heli to be his father may be explained by the not unusual circumstance that the same person had two names, like Matthew himself, who was also called Levi. Or it may be explained by saying that Joseph was the son-in-law of Heli, who was the father of Mary. (See Ruth 1:11, 12). Joseph's name may have been introduced in Luke's table in conformity with the Jewish custom in such cases. The bitterest enemies of Christianity in the earlier times never questioned Jesus' descent from David.

THE DAVIDIC LINE

Since Jesus was not descended from Josiah, through the flesh, even according to Joseph's ancestry, how then was it necessary for the life of Josiah to be preserved in order that Christ might be descended from the line of David? Or, was the "unbroken line" to come through Mary, as Luke records, which leaves out Josiah?

It is true, according to Luke, that Jesus was descended directly from David through Nathan, the second surviving son of Bathsheba. But according to Jewish reckoning it also is true that Jesus may be reckoned as the lineal descendant of David through the royal genealogy, as given in Matthew. The objection that Jechoniah was only the grandson instead of the son of Josiah is met by the fact that this would not do away with the Davidic ancestry of Jesus through Solomon. The claim that the line of Josiah ended with Jechoniah (Jer. 22:28-30) has no foundation, since that is not a statement that Jechoniah had no offspring. The record says, "Write ye this man childless." This was on account of his sins; but that he had children is the plain inference of the remainder of verse 30. Besides, Matthew 1:12 clearly decides this matter.

GOD'S SON IN HUMAN FORM

(1) Did not God's Son assume the form of man in the beginning? (2) Did not the Son of God at the time of the creation take a lower plane than when in the eternities, yet lower than in theophanies He appeared to men of old, and yet lower when He came into this world as the Son of Mary?

We see no proof that there was this gradual descent by stages from the form that the Son of God had in eternity to the time when He took the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7). Since man was made in the image and after the likeness of God, it is possible that this extended to his physical form, in which case we may assume a form of God (spiritual body) which was a prototype of the body of Christ Jesus the man. But this would not be saying that the Son of God had a human nature at the beginning, or even at the creation. Although in the Old Testament theophanies God the Son sometimes appeared in human form He did not partake of human nature. When Paul in Philippians 2:6 refers to Christ as "existing in the form of God," he refers to His original being, or state, which form was laid aside when, and not before, He took the "form of a servant" and the "likeness of man." Even then He emptied not Himself of His Godhead. As man He was still the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15) and could truthfully say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

THE FATHER AND THE SON

We, two Jews seeking enlightenment, respectfully submit the following questions—(1) Who was the father of Christ? (2) What is meant by the "virgin birth" of Jesus Christ? (3) Does the Old Testament say anything about a virgin birth? (4) What do Christ, Mary, Joseph, and New Testament writers teach about the birth of Christ? (5) How can God be the father of Christ since God is not a man? (6) Since God is invisible and Christ was visible, how could Christ be God?

(1) Christ had no human father. He always said that God was His Father, and that He and the Father were one (John 14:9, 10). (2) That Jesus Christ was born of a virgin who had never known a man (Luke 1:34). (3) The phrase "the seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15) is thought to so intimate, for no seed of the woman by natural generation could possibly utterly crush Satan. The clear statement of the "virgin birth" is found in Isaiah 7:14 and 9:36, Micah 5:2, Matthew 1:22, 23. (4) Christ said nothing about His birth, but he spoke about His pre-existence before He was born of Mary (John 17:5, 24), and how He had come down out of heaven from God (John 6:38, 62). Mary's testimony is very clear (Luke 1:31, 34); also that of

Joseph (Matt. 1:18, 19). For John's testimony see John 1:1-3, 14. For Luke's testimony see Luke 1:26-35. For Paul's testimony see Philippians 2:5-7. (5) God is not the father of Christ by natural generation. Christ is the eternal Son of God, who existed with God in perfect equality and likeness from the beginning (John 1:1). (6) The Person of Christ was visible because He took the form of man (Phil. 2:6-8).

JOHN'S ACQUAINTANCE WITH JESUS

If John the Baptist did not know Jesus (John 1:31, 33) how is it that in Matthew's account (3:14) he seemed to recognize Him?

It is not unlikely that prior to the baptism John knew Jesus as a relative, but not as the Messiah. We should also remember that since John knew that he was the forerunner of the Messiah, he was in a state of expectancy at this particular period of his ministry. As Jesus drew near to be baptized it is probable that the appearance of Jesus, together with the witness of the Spirit in John's own soul, was sufficient for him to recognize in Jesus one whom he felt he was unworthy to baptize, as Matthew records. But when the Holy Spirit descended in visible form and rested upon Jesus then John had the confirmation of the sign which the Father had said he would give him. It also has been suggested that prior to the baptism John probably knew Jesus personally, but not officially. Hence he must wait for the promised credential from the Father before he could designate Jesus as the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

THE BROTHERS OF JESUS

Who were the brethren of our Lord (Matthew 13:55)?

This is one of the most vexed problems in the New Testament, and one which cannot be positively answered. There are three theories: (1) That they were the sons of Joseph and Mary. (2) That they were the sons of Joseph by a former marriage. (3) That they were the cousins of Jesus. Each of these explanations has its advocates. We are inclined most strongly to the first view.

CHRIST'S TEMPTATIONS AND OURS

(1) Were Christ's temptations exactly the same as ours?
(2) Did He not have greater resources and was it not easier for Him to resist, seeing He was without a sinful nature?

(3) If so, were the three temptations in the wilderness the strongest Satan had to present?

(1) "Tempted in all points" does not mean necessarily that His temptations were in exactly the same form as ours, but that every part of His nature was subject to temptations similar to ours. (2) He had the resources of God to fall back upon, but so do we. His sinless nature probably made it easier for Him to resist, but the temptation was none the less real. Adam also possessed a sinless nature, but he knew to his sorrow what it was to be tempted. The very sensitiveness of Christ's nature may have made the struggle all the more bitter. Since Christ "suffered, being tempted," He is able to sympathize with us and deliver us. (4) Knowing the adroitness, cunning, and long experience of Satan, we need have no doubt that the three temptations presented to Christ in the wilderness were the very ones best calculated to cause His downfall.

COULD CHRIST HAVE SINNED?

Since Christ was tempted could He not have sinned?

This is one of the problems in theology which probably will never be satisfactorily solved for all. Were we to think of Him simply as a man we would say, "Since He was tempted He could have chosen to sin," but when we think of Him as God our Christian conscience revolts at the thought; and He was not tempted, merely as man, but as the God-man. Moreover, Jesus was different from all other men in this respect: He lived our life in such constant and perfect accord with the Father's will, in such fullness of God's love and power, that it was morally and spiritually impossible for Him to yield to sin. There was a physical possibility, but His human soul was so united with the divine Logos that God's holiness interpenetrated Christ's whole being, making the least form of sin instantly perceptible and utterly repugnant. Temptation had power to appeal to Him, but not in such a way as to cause Him to sin. Sin was not a physical, but a moral impossibility.

TWO ANOINTINGS OF JESUS

Is Mary of Bethany the same Mary who anointed Jesus in the home of Simon the Pharisee?

There were two anointings of Jesus. The one recorded in Luke 7:36 was by a "sinner," in the house of Simon, the Phari-

see, and in Galilee. The other anointing was in Bethany, in the house of Simon, the leper, and was by Mary, the sister of Martha, (John 12:3; Matt. 26:6). No blood relation existed between Simon, the leper, and Martha and Mary, so far as we know. John 11:2 is simply a reference to the anointing related in chapter twelve.

MYSTERY OF CHRIST'S DEATH

(1) Was it just the humanity of Christ that died upon the cross? Or was it some mysterious blending of the divine and the human? (2) Please explain the enclosed texts.

(1) There was never any "mysterious blending of the divine and the human" natures in Christ. They were united, but not blended. The crucifixion of Christ affected only His body, though it meant more than the mere death of His body. In that awful hour there was a sense of utter loneliness and separation from the Father during which Christ suffered in the place of the sinner (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13). (2) John 6:48, 53, 57. Christ as the "Bread of Life" is appropriated only by faith. Romans 5:6, 8, 9, 10. The sinner is justified and reconciled to God by the death of Christ. Since there was power in His death to reconcile us to God, i. e., if we are saved from the guilt of sin through the Cross, much more will the living Christ be able to save us unto the uttermost. He is able both to save and to keep us saved.

FORSAKEN BY GOD

What is the meaning of the cry upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

This cry of Jesus seems to express the utter loneliness and sense of momentary desertion because He was tasting the despair of the sins of others. It was a "cry of conscious innocence"; but though sinless, Christ had to taste the bitterest dregs of sin as man's substitute.

CHRIST MADE PERFECT

Will you please explain Hebrews 5:8, 9?

Christ always had the spirit of obedience, but only through obedience unto the death of the Cross could He give the fullest proof of it. In verse 9 the being "made perfect," has no reference to Christ's moral nature, but to His being made perfect as a

Saviour through bearing our sins upon the Cross. It was then that He became the author, or source, of eternal salvation.

DIVIDING THE SPOIL WITH THE STRONG

What is the meaning of "He shall divide the spoil with the strong" (Isa. 53:12)?

The reference is to Christ, and in connection with His death. What happened historically seems to be indicated in Colossians 2:15, where we are told that Christ "despoiled principalities and powers." This was accomplished when He descended into Hades, released the Old Testament saints, and ascended on high, "leading captivity captive." His ascension also was a triumphing over Satan and his evil angels who inhabit the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12). Thus He despoiled them and "divided the spoil with the strong," taking His portion by might.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND THE BODILY RESURRECTION

Does Christian Science deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ?

In *Science and Health* (p. 292, 1913 edition) the resurrection and ascension are referred to, but are vaguely explained away upon pages 313 and 314. Since death itself is merely a "mortal illusion" (p. 289), what more could the bodily resurrection of Jesus be? Resurrection means only "spiritualization of thought" (p. 593).

NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION

(1) Why was it necessary for Jesus to have a literal bodily resurrection? (2) Why is it necessary for believers? (3) What does "raised again for our justification" mean?

(1) In order to prove His complete victory over death, and to show God's power in our behalf (Eph. 1:19, 20), and to become "the first-fruits" (1 Cor. 15:20). (2) Because our salvation includes the body (Rom. 8:11, 23). (3) Because His resurrection sealed to us all the benefits of His death (1 Cor. 15:17).

REFUSING TO BE TOUCHED

Why did Jesus refuse to be touched after His resurrection? John 20:17.

Among the various interpretations given, the one appealing to us is that Jesus refused to be touched in the sense of being

held or retained here, as the Greek verb may indicate. His resurrection changed things. The fellowship henceforth, to be the most helpful, had to be spiritual; and this new fellowship could not be established until after He had ascended to the Father and sent the Holy Spirit, who would abide in His followers forever.

CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

(1) Did Jesus' natural body ascend to heaven? If not, what became of it? (2) How can God be omnipresent, yet be enthroned in heaven?

(1) Jesus ascended to heaven in His resurrection body, into which His natural body had been changed. It was the same body, yet different. (2) God is omnipresent, yet the throne of God is in heaven. There also Christ now is, so far as His bodily presence is concerned. This is what He had in mind when speaking of His going away from His disciples. Although absent in body, at God's right hand, He is spiritually present in the heart of every believer in the person of the Holy Spirit. This indwelling also includes the Father, for they are three in one (John 14:16-20).

CHAPTER XIII

THE JEWS

THE CHOSEN NATION

Are the Jews still God's chosen people, or have they been rejected because they disobeyed God and rejected Jesus as their King?

This is practically the question answered by the Apostle Paul in the eleventh chapter of Romans. In brief his answer is that the Jew is now partially rejected, but not totally; temporarily, but not finally. See verses 1, 2, 5, 11, 12, 15, 23, 26. God never has abandoned His kingdom program for Israel of old. It is still the chosen nation, which God will yet set on high above all the nations on earth.

PRIESTLY GARMENTS

(1) How did the garments of the high priest and the priest differ? (2) When were the garments of glory worn? (3) What were the duties of the high priest besides officiating on the great Day of Atonement?

(1) In addition to the brodered linen tunic, the linen girdle, the linen breeches, and the turban of linen of the priests, the high priest wore the breastplate, the ephod, the robe of ephod, and the mitre or upper turban with its engraved gold plate.

(2) Apparently upon all official occasions, except the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:4). (3) See the following references for a partial list of his other duties: Exodus 29; Leviticus 24:9; 6:16; 13:2-59; Numbers 27:19, 21.

REJECTION OF THE JEWS

When were the Jews rejected?

The announcement of Christ's rejection of the Jews as a nation was made in connection with His weeping over the city (Matt. 23:38). But the rejection was tempered with the promise that they would see Him when they should long for His coming (Matt. 2:39).

PRESENT AND FUTURE STANDING OF ISRAEL

What does Romans 11:21-27 teach concerning Israel?

Verses 21 and 22 teach that Israel is at the present time rejected nationally. Individuals may be saved (v. 5) and become members of Christ's Church, but as a nation Israel is experiencing the "severity" of God, instead of His grace. Verses 23-27 teach that God is to deal nationally and graciously with Israel some time in the future—"after the fullness of the Gentiles is come in." This time is further and more especially designated to be when the "Deliverer shall come out of Zion." He it is who "shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

REPENTANCE OF ISRAEL

(1) Will Christ come for His saints prior to the repentance of Israel? (2) In the light of Acts 3:20, 21 how can Israel be converted by means of the Lord's coming? (3) Since, according to Deuteronomy, Israel's final restoration is contingent upon their obedience to all the commandments will they again be placed under the Deuteronomic regulations? (4) How could Moses say that this commandment was not too hard for them (Deut. 30:12f.), whereas the New Testament declares man's utter inability to keep the law?

(1) The Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16) takes precedence to the conversion of Israel. (2) The phrase, "the times of the restoration of all things," is sufficiently broad to provide for the conversion of Israel by the return of the Lord (Rom. 11:26). (3) Deuteronomy 30:2, 3 would seem to indicate that the fulness of God's blessing will hinge upon whole-hearted obedience to the Mosaic law. Verse eight also prophesies that Israel will indeed obey. This they will be enabled to do because by the Holy Spirit they will love God utterly (v. 6). (4) Deuteronomy 30:12-20 does not teach that the Israelites could keep the requirements of God perfectly, but that they were able to choose to obey rather than to disobey.

DRY BONES LIVE

Will you please explain Ezekiel 37?

The two illustrations teach the future and permanent reunion of the two houses of Israel and their firm establishment in their own land under one king. Although Israel now seems dead, like the dry bones in the valley, the Spirit of God is able to resurrect

them, and cause them to live again in their "own land." The union of the two sticks in the hand of the prophet also symbolized the union of Judah and Israel into one nation, in their own land, "upon the mountains of Israel," never again to be separated (v. 22). At that time they will be cleansed from all of their transgressions, and the house of David will again rule over them. Their King will be David's greater Son (Luke 1:32), and the nations shall know that Jehovah sanctifieth them and is their God (v. 28).

ANGLO-ISRAEL

What do you think of the Anglo-Israel theory?

The theory that the Anglo-Saxon race represents the modern descendants of the lost tribes of Israel rests quite as much upon tradition and supposition as upon historical facts. The links in the chain of historical evidence are not evident enough to establish the theory, although certain facts are quite remarkable.

The promise made to David that he would "never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel" (Jer. 33:17) cannot refer only to the ten tribes of the northern kingdom, for that had already been destroyed prior to the days of Jeremiah. The Messianic promise made to David included all of the twelve tribes and cannot be limited even temporarily to the ten tribes. Furthermore, David's throne was located in Jerusalem, not London, nor anywhere else. Israel has no corporate existence while outside of, or exiled from, the promised land. Hence no king is reigning over Israel at the present time. Her history is a blank so long as she is not in covenant relation to God. She is now under the curse on account of her disobedience. The time is coming, however, when both branches of the house of Israel will be restored to the land given to them and then a King, David's Son, will reign over them forever (Luke 1:31-33).

CHAPTER XIV

JUDGMENTS OF GOD

ENTAILED JUDGMENT

Please explain Exodus 20:5 and Ezekiel 18:18-20.

The particular sin referred to is idolatry, which is necessarily degrading and causes deterioration from generation to generation. In God's natural or providential government of the world every iniquity of the father entails affliction in some form or other upon posterity. We all inherit handicaps and often positive suffering on account of the misconduct or the lack of restraint upon the part of near or remote ancestors. This passage of Scripture may also include the direct and personal judgments of God. But, in any case, such judgments are tempered with mercy—they are limited to the third or fourth generation; while the favor of God to those who keep His commandments extends even to the thousandth generation. (2) The passage from Ezekiel teaches an added, not a contradictory truth, namely, the son shall not suffer the death penalty for his father. The law of sin is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Only in this life is the iniquity of the father visited upon the children. Before God each person stands upon his own merit when the life after death is in view.

JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

(1) At the judgment of the living nations (Matt. 25:31-46) is each nation to be judged as a collective body, or are the people thereof to be judged? (2) Does not that salvation appear to be based upon good works rather than upon faith?

(1) We should say both collectively and individually. Nations, as such, are judged according to their corporate acts. Since they have no corporate existence in the next life they can be judged only here. But a nation is composed of individual units, each of whom is personally responsible to God, and only these can be rewarded either by eternal life or by eternal fire. (2) The people who here are saved or condemned are not believers or unbelievers, but the righteous and the unrighteous, the sheep

and the goats. This is a judgment upon those living upon the earth when Christ the King returns in glory to establish His kingdom. He here applies the title of "King" to Himself (v. 34). The basis of that judgment will indeed be good works, particularly the treatment given His "brethren," who probably are the Jews.

FUTURE RETRIBUTION

(1) What is meant by the words, Sheol, Hades, Gehenna? (2) What are the "second death" and the "lake of fire" in Revelation 2:8, and are they literal and eternal? (3) What is meant by a "ransom for all" in 1 Timothy 2:5, 6? (4) What is meant by Acts 3:19-21? (5) Is the soul immortal? (6) Where do the saved and the lost go at death? (7) If the world is to burn up, how can it abide forever (Eccles. 1:4)?

(1) "Sheol" of the Old Testament and "Hades" of the New, mean practically the same; namely, sometimes the grave, but usually the abode of departed spirits. The word "Gehenna" always implies what is called in the Revelation the lake of fire, which is the final abode of Satan and lost souls. (2) The "second death" of Revelation 21:8 is said to be this lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). It is not a physical death, of course, for the beast and the false prophet will have already been in the lake of fire for a thousand years (19:20). That this punishment is eternal seems to be plainly taught in Revelation 20:10, and 14:10-11. See also Mark 9:43-48; 3:29; Matthew 25:41, 46. Even if the language be figurative, it is figurative of something inconceivably awful and eternal. How blessed it is that men do not need to be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 2:11)! (3) Christ is the one Mediator between God and men—all men. At the proper time, "the fulness of time," He gave Himself a ransom for all. That is, He bore the sins of the world, paid the redemptive price. All that men now have to do in order to be saved is to accept Him as their sacrifice for sin. (4) The world is not to be utterly destroyed at the return of Christ, as you say you have been taught. Sinners will be destroyed and the earth purified, then will follow the restoration of all things spoken by the prophets. That is, when the King returns His kingdom will be fully established. (5) All men are to have endless existence, but for the Christian immortality has a peculiar sig-

nificance. We now possess eternal life, but at the time of the resurrection our bodies are to take on immortality (1 Cor. 15:53, 54). (6) The souls of believers go at once to heaven (Luke 23:43; 5:6, 8; Phil. 1:23, 24). The wicked are cast into hell, there to await their final judgment (Luke 16:23, 24; Jude 6, 7). (7) The present earth will be destroyed by fire in the same sense that the ancient world was destroyed by water. That is, there will be a complete renovation, but not annihilation (2 Pet. 3:6, 7, 10).

WHO ARE THE LOST?

- (1) Were people lost who preceded the giving of the Law?
- (2) Are the heathen lost who do not hear the gospel?

(1) Although Romans 5:13 states that "sin is not imputed where there is no law," yet the context leaves no doubt that, since death reigned from Adam to Moses, mankind possessed the inclination to break God's law even when it was not specifically revealed to them. Therefore judgment came upon all men as descendants of Adam (16:18) even though their sin was not just the same as his. (2) Likewise the heathen of today are wilfully sinning against their light. Although not possessing the light of the gospel, Paul declares that they have the light of nature (Rom. 1:18-20) and the light of conscience (Rom. 2:15). Of course we believe that God will deal justly with those who have not the gospel. God is the sovereign dispenser of grace; and if by His grace the atonement provides for infant salvation, is it not possible that God will in some way hear the cry of one who loathes his sin and truly repents of it even though he may never have heard of the gospel? May not God cause Christ to be revealed to him as He was to Cornelius (Acts 10)? But even so, the condition of the heathen is so deplorable that they may fittingly be described in the mass as being "without God and without hope."

ETERNALLY LOST

Is a person eternally lost if he does not accept Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour before death?

This is not for man to decide. We are entirely ignorant here except we believe what God has revealed to us. Do we believe that "eternal life," "eternal salvation," "eternal redemption," "eternal glory," "eternal Spirit," mean something that is unend-

ing? Then why limit the duration of "eternal fire," "eternal punishment"? See Mark 3:29; 8:36; 9:43-48; Matthew 18:8; 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:9.

IS HELL LITERAL?

Is hell a real place of actual fire and brimstone?

The flames, the brimstone, the fumes, and other phenomena of earthquake eruptions suggest the reality of hell. It may be real without being material, and even though the Scripture language may prove to be symbolic, this does not lessen its reality. It is the opposite of heaven, and is the place of torment and of unending conscious suffering. Eternal torment seems to be taught in such passages as Mark 9:43-48; Matthew 25:4, 46; Luke 16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9 (R. V.).

PREDESTINATION TO HELL

In the light of Acts 13:48 and Romans 8:29, 30, does God predestinate any one to go to hell?

Predestination has primary, if not sole reference to the elect. But even the salvation of the elect is determined by our acceptance of the grace of God and the exercise of faith. That is, no man is saved contrary to his own freedom. Christ spake of the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, which certain ones are to inherit, but when He referred to the eternal fire He said it was prepared for the Devil and his angels. If men choose to go there, it is contrary to God's desire for them, because He is longsuffering, not wanting any to perish. Matthew 25:34, 41 and 2 Peter 3:9.

PURGATORY

(1) Are there any books left out of the Bible from which the Roman Catholics get their doctrine of purgatory? (2) Is there a place the Catholics call "Limbo"?

(1) Protestants have not omitted from the Bible any books considered by the Early Church as divinely inspired. In the Clementine Homilies, which contains a form of Ebionitism, a purgatory is said to be mentioned, where incorrigible souls are annihilated. Also *The Shepherd of Hermas* is claimed to contain germs of the doctrine of purgatory, but the passage is not necessarily so to be interpreted. (2) "Limbus," according to Roman Catholic theology is used of two places: *Limbus patrum*,

for the souls of those who died before the atonement; and *limbus infantium*, for the souls of unbaptized children.

EVERY IDLE WORD

Does "idle word" in Matthew 12:36 refer to ordinary social levity?

Not especially, but neither shall this form of speech be excluded from the judgment. Since words indicate character and have such power for good or evil over others, special oversight needs to be placed upon them. Of themselves they will not bring upon us eternal condemnation, but we shall have to "give account" for them.

CHAPTER XV

THE KINGDOM

CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE

(1) Has Christ yet assumed His kingly office? (2) Explain the bearing of the following texts upon this: Revelation 3:21; Hebrews 10:12, 13; 1 Corinthians 15:22-28.

(1) Christ was king while upon earth. He was so born, so proclaimed, so crucified. He always spake "with authority." Many recognized His kingship and obeyed. Alas, some did not. Demons recognized Him and always obeyed. At the present time Christ is the "King invisible" (1 Tim. 1:17) and reigns on earth only through His people. The full exercise of His kingly office upon this earth is reserved for the future, when He comes in Person and reigns in glory.

(2) Revelation 3:21—Christ's throne is the throne of the Son of Man, and will be the throne of all the earth. At present He is upon the Father's throne, which is in heaven.

Hebrews 10:12, 13—Christ at the right hand of God the Father, in the place of expectant future victory over all enemies.

1 Corinthians 15:22-28—Following the return of Christ to the earth, and following also the kingdom of the Son of Man, Christ will deliver up the earthly kingdom unto the Father.

CHRIST AS AN EARTHLY KING

(1) In John 18:36, 37 did not Christ deny that He was an earthly king? (2) Did not Christ change His plans when He saw that the Jews would not receive Him as their king and decide to found a church instead of a kingdom?

(1) If He had stopped with the first part of the verse, we might so conclude; but He modifies that statement by the closing words, "but *now* is my kingdom not from hence." That is, the time had not come for the establishment of His earthly kingdom.

(2) At a particular period in His ministry Christ began to speak to His disciples in private about His Church. But this does not mean that Christ changed His plans, His kingdom upon the

earth will yet be established in accordance with the prophecies concerning the kingdom in the Old and New Testaments. Moreover, Christ knew before He came to the earth that the Jewish nation would crucify Him. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and the twenty-second Psalm clearly portray the fact of His crucifixion. But He also had in mind before He came the formation of the Church, which is mentioned in the Old Testament a number of times, although the meaning of the prophecies was not clearly understood by the men through whom they were given.

CHURCH AND KINGDOM

- (1) What is the meaning of the Kingdom in Scripture?
- (2) What is the relation of the Church to the Kingdom?

(1) In its widest sense the Kingdom embraces all that is under the government of God, whether in heaven or on earth; but ordinarily the term refers to the government of this earth. First it was committed to Israel. Afterwards it was given into the hands of the Gentiles. Finally it is to be returned to Israel, at which time it will embrace all nations (Dan. 7:12, 14, 22, 27; Matt. 25:31-34). During the time of Christ's absence the Kingdom is called the "Kingdom of Heaven." When He returns it will be the Kingdom of the Son of Man. (2) The Church is distinct from Israel and from the Kingdom, whether past or future; but during the present time the Church is part of the Kingdom of Heaven, for we are born into the Kingdom (John 3:7) and translated into the Kingdom (Col. 1:13).

THE UNENDING KINGDOM

How do you harmonize the statement in Luke 1:33 about the kingdom without end, with that in Revelation 20:4, 5?

While the Messianic kingdom is limited as such to a thousand years, yet the prophecies of the Old Testament agree with Luke 1:33 in merging the Millennial Kingdom into the ages which are to follow. See 2 Samuel 7:13, Psalm 72:5-7, Daniel 2:44; 7:13.

GREATNESS OF THE LEAST

What is the meaning of the last part of Matthew 11:11?

None who preceded John the Baptist was greater than he; yet he who is a member of the Kingdom of Heaven surpasses even the Baptist. This greatness, however, is not that of a superior

personality or service, but only a greatness of position and privilege. One who is in the kingdom inaugurated by Christ and the apostles is more honored than even John the Baptist, who was merely a proclaimer of the kingdom.

CHRIST'S OFFER OF THE KINGDOM

If Christ came to earth with the full purpose of taking the throne in Jerusalem, but was rejected, what would have become of the Cross if He had been accepted?

Permit us to say that we do not teach that Christ came to earth with any such unconditional purpose. God foreknew that Christ would be rejected. It was so prophesied. Christ knew that he would be rejected. He revealed that fact early in His ministry (John 2:18-21). Hence He could not have fully purposed to take His earthly throne in Jerusalem at that time. Nevertheless, did not Christ sincerely offer Himself to the Jews as their King (Matt. 21:5; 27:11; John 1:49; 19:21)? But if He did so offer Himself, and they had accepted Him, then humanly speaking, would not He have established His earthly kingdom? But the nation was not spiritually ready to meet Christ's conditions. He could not reign over an apostate nation, and the nation would not repent and forsake its sins. God foreknew all this. Hence, Christ's offer of Himself as King was merely preliminary to the all-embracing purpose of His coming to the earth, which was to offer up Himself as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. The Cross was central in the purpose of Christ's coming. You are perfectly right there. The Cross was a necessity. It could not be set aside by any problematic acceptance of Jesus as King by the unregenerated Jewish nation. Yet does this fact preclude the genuine offer of Himself to the nation as its King, or relieve the nation of the awful responsibility of rejecting Him? (Acts 2:23.)

THE KINGDOM "WITHIN"

(1) What is the meaning of "the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21)? (2) What is the significance of the title, "Son of Man"?

(1) The phrase may mean "inside of you," in the sense that it is not something merely external or visible, which is true in a certain sense; or it may mean that the kingdom is even now "in the midst of you," in the person of Christ the King, who has

already begun to establish it. (2) The title "Son of Man" closely identifies Christ with man as the new Head of the race. This latter will be more in evidence when He returns to establish the kingdom of the Son of Man (Matt. 19:28).

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Why is the "kingdom of heaven" not mentioned in the Epistles? Does it not belong wholly to millennial times? Is it not totally distinct from the kingdom of God?

The "kingdom of heaven" could not belong wholly to millennial times, for it was proclaimed as "at hand" by John the Baptist and by Jesus Christ, though now it would appear to be in abeyance until millennial times, at least in its manifested form.

We ought not to say that the "kingdom of heaven" and the "kingdom of God" have nothing in common. The terms were sometimes used interchangeably in the Gospels (Matt. 11:11, cf. Luke 7:28). Even though we place the kingdom of heaven in the future it will be a form of the kingdom of God in its extensive sense, the visible kingdom of God upon earth. And although the Church is not the same as the Kingdom, yet by being members of the Body of Christ we also are members of His kingdom (Col. 1:13).

SUBJECTS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

What is the meaning of the phrase "kingdom of heaven" in Matthew 5:3; 7:21; 18:3, 4?

All three passages have reference to the kingdom of heaven in its spiritual aspects. The subjects of that kingdom are poor in spirit, not proud or self-sufficient, but submissive to the King; they enter the kingdom, not by mere profession, but through the actual doing of the will of the Father; they also must be converted and become as little children, eager to learn and to please.

THE VARIOUS KINGDOMS

(1) The "kingdom of God" is universal. He "ruleth over all," good and evil angels, as well as good and evil men. But intensively and actually, so far as men are concerned, God rules only in hearts that are in full accord with Him. The rebellious are counted in the kingdom of Satan.

(2) The "kingdom of heaven" is a part of the universal kingdom of God. Technically, it was established upon earth by Christ, at His first coming, and has since been enlarged by His disciples under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. Thus Christ is now exercising His authority from heaven. The "kingdom of heaven" is earthly and visible and practically co-extensive with Christendom. The character and course of the "kingdom of heaven" is set forth in the parables of the kingdom in Matthew thirteen.

* * *

(1) Christ was born King of the Jews, offered Himself as such, and was so crucified. When Pilate asked Him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Christ assented. It is true that He also said, "My kingdom is not of this world," but He immediately modified the statement by adding, "but *now* my kingdom is not from hence." He had in mind the Messianic Kingdom which could not then be established, but which He will establish when He returns (Acts 15:15-17).

(2) There is a sense in which the Church is the "spiritual kingdom" (Col. 1:13), but we should distinguish between this invisible kingdom and the visible Kingdom of the Son of Man during millennial times.

(3) The phrase, "building up the kingdom of God," is often loosely used of the gradual transformation of society by the practical application of "the principles of Jesus." The phrase may properly be used only with reference to the kingdom in its extensive sense. The phrase, "souls being born into the kingdom," is more accurate, having the authority of Jesus in His conversation with Nicodemus. Through regeneration souls are transformed and become part of the true Church, or mystical body of Christ, which at present forms an invisible kingdom.

* * *

(1) The phrase, "extending Christ's kingdom on earth," refers to the extension of the Church, and has various meanings according to the people who use it. It may mean the salvation of men, or it may mean only extending the influence of the teachings of Jesus.

(2) Strictly speaking there is only one kingdom. The different names are various phases and spheres of the kingdom of God.

(3) The "kingdom of heaven" is the present limited rule of earthly affairs by Christ from heaven. This embraces Christen-

dom; but within this nominal kingdom is the kernel of the true Church, made up of souls who are subject to the will of God. The rule of Christ is now widely disputed. The spirit of the Jews who rejected Jesus as their King is still the spirit of the world at large, which declares "We will not have this man to reign over us." The time is coming when all things which cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, will be gathered out of the kingdom and destroyed. There is to be a future, visible kingdom of righteousness, peace, and glory.

(4) It is confusing to speak of the Church as "the kingdom." During the present age the Kingdom is in its mystery form. During the coming age the Kingdom will be manifested. This is the Church Age; the next the Kingdom Age.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAW

VALUE OF THE LAW

What is the value of the Old Testament laws?

The laws of the Old Testament are commonly divided into legal and ceremonial. The Ten Commandments may be considered general because of the great principles underlying them. The value of these laws lies chiefly (1) in their revelation of the holiness of God, and (2) in the perfect moral standard he establishes for man. There is no salvation through them, because no man can perfectly keep them. The Christian is under the law of Christ, having been redeemed from "the curse of the law." Christ is the "end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth." The Christian is not under law in the same sense that the Jews were under law, but under grace. The law is perfect, and is not done away by Christ. The Old Testament law is still in force, but not for those who are saved by Christ.

Concerning the laws of the offerings, they are wholly Jewish, but for us they have a distinct typical value in helping us to understand the sacrificial and mediatorial work of Christ.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

(1) Is it correct to restrict the "Law of Moses" to the Ten Commandments? (2) Why does the numbering of the Ten Commandments vary?

(1) Not correct. (2) There are three methods of dividing the verses in Exodus 20 into the Ten Commandments: (a) verse 2 the first, according to the Jews, verses 3-6 the third, and verse 17, the tenth; (b) according to the Greek and Reformed churches, verse 3 the first, verses 4-6 the third, and verse 17 the tenth; (c) according to the Roman and Lutheran churches, verses 3-6 is one commandment and verse 17 contains two commandments. The second method seems to be the correct one, and has the support of Josephus and Philo.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS STILL BINDING

Was Mr. Moody right in saying that the Ten Commandments are still binding?

Although the Ten Commandments were not given to Gentiles, yet because they are based upon fundamental principles of right relationships they are still binding in principle, for they are written upon all men's consciences.

But the Christian is under grace. This does not mean that he ignores law, or is exempt from law, but that he is free from the law of sin and death, and to keep God's laws is not irksome to him, for love is the fulfilling of the law.

Christ did not abolish the Ten Commandments. They contain the principles which underlie the welfare and permanence of the best in our civilization. There is no salvation in keeping them, but they are God's standards of righteousness for this sinning world. The observance of them would stabilize and purify society today.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE LAW

Are Christians under law; or, are they to ignore the law as contained in the Old Testament?

God's laws are always operative, whether in the physical, moral, or spiritual realm. Miracle never sets them aside, not even the miracle of the new birth. In a sense God's laws are a part of Himself and cannot be abrogated. But particular requirements in the keeping of certain laws may vary. For example, the ceremonial laws, as given to the Jewish nation, are not required of the Christian. There is also a sense in which we are not even under the Ten Commandments, since we are under the law of the Spirit, or under the law of Christ. But just here we must be on our guard and remember that the principles underlying all of the Old Testament laws have not changed, and in fact are re-emphasized in the New Testament. The Old and the New Testaments are a unit, and each is needed to supplement the other. The full revelation of God by Christ only emphasizes the Old Testament revelation. Indeed Christ even intensified the law, and declared it must all be fulfilled; a statement, however, which included prophecy as well as law in particular.

CHAPTER XVII

MODERN HERESIES

BAHAI AND THE ANTICHRIST

Is the Bahai movement an agency of the coming Antichrist?

We should say rather one of the agencies preparing the way for the coming of Antichrist. You have called our attention to Professor Mazandarani who traveled in the United States and Canada, lecturing in clubs, colleges, universities, and churches, and teaching a universal religion, a universal language, a universal education, the brotherhood of man, and a parliament of man; no sin, no salvation, no cross of Christ, but the exaltation of humanity. In Chicago the second Bahai temple is to be erected at a cost of \$3,000,000. Yes; their teachings appeal to many, and are well calculated to help towards the preparation of the world for the coming of Antichrist.

COMMENDING CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Is it right for the teacher of a Bible class to assert that the faces of Christian Scientists shine because they read their Bibles so much?

Your Bible class teacher evidently does not know what he is commending when he commends Christian Science in any form. He probably is not aware that Christian Science denies all of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. As a religion, Christian Science is utterly false. Many members of that false religion, however, are not aware of its false teachings. These may possibly read their Bibles and get much good from so doing; their faces may indeed shine. But in this connection, let us remember that Satan is an expert imitator. Just now he is deceiving many by imitating the very graces and fruits of the Holy Spirit. This is the explanation of the professed peace and joy of some who call themselves "Scientists."

MODERNISTIC CLAIMS

(1) Did the doctrine of the Trinity originate with Augustine and Athanasius? (2) Was the doctrine of the Logos

taken from Philonic Alexandrian philosophy? (3) Was the doctrine of the virgin birth an introduction into a late edition of Matthew's Gospel? (4) Does it contradict the genealogies of Matthew and Luke? (5) Did the doctrine of original sin and the atonement originate with Paul, and is it not found in the teachings of Jesus?

(1) While Athanasius was a great defender of this doctrine, which was later developed by Augustine, the term was first used by Tertullian a century before Athanasius. But their statement and defense of the doctrine did not "originate" it, for it was in the Bible long before it was scientifically formulated. (2) The term "Logos" was in use before John, but John was not dependent upon Philo for his knowledge of the Logos doctrine. John was dependent only upon the Old Testament and direct divine revelation. (3) This is merely an assertion of the modernists, and cannot be proved by them. We have no evidence that Matthew's Gospel ever existed in any other form than now. (4) No contradiction. Matthew states that Joseph was the husband of Mary, "of whom was born Jesus," but does not state that Joseph was the father of Jesus. Indeed, the verses which follow distinctly state that he was not, but that Mary "was found with child by the Holy Ghost." The genealogy in Luke also safeguards the doctrine (3:23), while the first chapter fully establishes the fact of the virgin birth. (5) The doctrine of original sin was developed by Paul, but it is prominent in the Old Testament, as is also the doctrine of the atonement. As to the Gospels, see John 8:21, 24 for the fact of sin and the lost state if out of Christ, and Matthew 26:28 and John 3:14-16 for the fact of Christ's atonement for sin.

THE CHRISTIAN CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH

What are the doctrinal beliefs of the Christian Apostolic Church in Zion?

We wrote to Zion, Illinois, and the "General Ecclesiastical Secretary" forwarded copies of their publications, but no definite statement of their beliefs, other than as given in fragmentary fashion in the publications. A summary of these follows:

They believe theirs is the "only church on earth today which stands foursquare for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints," that all other churches are apostate, and that all

who wish to come out and be separate should hasten to Zion, Illinois, as the only place of refuge.

"Hebrews 13:12-14 is literally fulfilled in all who come to Christ in Zion. The Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion is not a denomination among the many human denominations of this hour, but a fulfilment of prophecy. It is therefore God's one and only organization in the end of the Church Period."—*Leaves of Healing*, May 3, 1919.

They believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Jesus Christ, salvation by divine sacrifice, and the premillennial coming of Christ.

Dr. Dowie taught that "Christ will pursue the sinner through earth, through hell, forever, until He brings him back to God." He said hell would be a grand field for missionary operations, and while there is a real hell, real Devil, and real torment, hell cannot endure forever.

He also taught that there are many in whom the Holy Spirit does not dwell, though they are Christians, because they have disobeyed in regard to repentance and baptism, believing that repentance must come before faith.—*A series of Addresses on Repentance*.

He taught that next to salvation, divine healing is the oldest doctrine of the Bible, and that it is the absolute will of God to heal today.

Dr. Voliva, in *Leaves of Healing*, November 12, 1921, says: "The fact that Zion preaches divine healing and lives it is another proof that Zion is the beginning of the millennium—the preparation for joint rulership with the King of kings and Lord of lords." He also says, "Doctors are of the Devil—doctors are murderers."

THE NATIONAL BIBLE INSTITUTION

Who and what are these people?

We have no complete statement of the teachings of this sect, whose headquarters are at Oregon, Ill. But, judging from a leading article in their publication, *The Restitution Herald*, they are Unitarians in their essential doctrine. This article states that Christ was a created being, and that He was not pre-existent. He began to be when He was born to Mary, hence He was a mere man. No matter what form Unitarianism takes it robs Christ of His deity, and destroys the value of His atonement for sin upon

the cross. Hence the way of salvation, according to this sect, is repentance, immersion, and a holy life. This is salvation by our own good works, instead of by Christ.

NEW THOUGHT

What is "New Thought"?

As a religion New Thought is an attempt at self-salvation through the exercise of one's own will. Christian terms are used, but with a new meaning. Evil is non-existent and sin is only ignorance. Sin and sickness may be overcome by knowledge and the exercise of will-power. Atonement is merely the harmonizing of one's lower self with the higher. One of its leading popular writers, Ralph Waldo Trine, is a pantheist, and this teaching is prominent in other writings. Only one being exists, and under such titles as "the All in All," "the Infinite," "the All Good." New Thought is the opposite of Christianity in its vital teachings.

THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

Is the modern Pentecostal movement of God, or of the Devil? Does the Holy Spirit manifest Himself by making one lie on the floor unconscious for hours, sometimes uttering sounds impossible to understand? How do you explain Acts 2:38, 39? Do we receive the Holy Spirit when we are saved?

If the Pentecostal movement is of God, some features of it certainly have been perverted by the Devil. The New Testament instances of the coming of the Holy Spirit do not record such physical phenomena as you relate. The only two who became unconscious and lay upon the floor never recovered (Acts 5:2, 10). Many good people are connected with the Pentecostal movement, true to Christ and zealous for the salvation of souls, but in our judgment they are misled about the gift of tongues.

The words in Acts 2:38, 39 are to be taken literally. The gift of the Holy Spirit is to be expected at the time of salvation, but separate experiences and fillings may and should follow.

UNDER THE POWER

Please explain what "under the power" means, as used by the Holy Rollers. Is it the power of the Holy Ghost that

causes them to roll upon the floor and have physical contortions?

These Pentecostal workers have some good people among them, and give a good gospel message; but in their after meetings we are constrained to believe that some of them are possessed by another spirit instead of the Holy Spirit. God is not the author of confusion, and the Holy Spirit is subject to the prophets (1 Cor. 14:23-26).

PENTECOSTAL ERRORS

We are informed that there are divisions among the Pentecostal people, but so far as we know they all hold erroneous views about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, and not simply "the spirit of Jesus." A particular branch is also wrong in teaching healing of the body through immersion. As to the baptismal formula there may be difference in practice without being heretical.

ERRORS OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM

Do you know any grave doctrinal errors of Seventh-Day Adventists?

Concerning sin they teach that since the year 1844 Christ has been busy examining the sins of believers which, when pardoned by the Father, are put upon Satan who bears them away as a scapegoat. Sinners and Satan are to be annihilated after the 1000 years.

The blood of Christ does not cancel our sins, but the sinner thereby simply acknowledges the authority of the law and longs for pardon. The keeping of the law is necessary to salvation. Believers who do not keep the Sabbath are lost. When Christ finally returns to the earth only 144,000 will be saved, and these will be the Adventists.

They also teach that souls sleep after death until the thousand years. We advise a pamphlet by Rev. W. E. Biedewolf, D. D., entitled, *Seventh-Day Adventism*. Any of the books and pamphlets by Rev. D. M. Canright, who was himself once a Seventh-Day Adventist, are excellent.

SWEDENBORGIANISM

What are the fundamental teachings of Swedenborgianism? Are they Scriptural? Are they who accept them saved?

While the New Church, or the Church of the New Jerusalem, believes in the Deity of Christ and in the Virgin birth, it also teaches the extreme view that Christ is the one only God, and denies the personality of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. This sect rejects the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. He saves us by our being obedient to Him, apart from His righteousness being imputed to us. This is salvation by good works, or self-effort, and is unscriptural. They make no provision for the guilt of sin and the need of regeneration. Their salvation is only from present sins, which is mere reformation. The sect cannot be classified as truly evangelical.

Are there any books or other writing that expose the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg?

Some fifty years ago, when there was a kind of revival of Swedenborgianism, two books were written against it, one by J. J. Van Oosterzee, the Dutch theologian, which was entitled simply, *Emanuel Swedenborg*, and the other by an Englishman, named Simpson, who called his book, *The Delusions and Errors of Emanuel Swedenborg*. It is doubtful, however, if either of these can be obtained outside of a private or public library.

At about the same time, a vigorous pamphlet against the teachings was written by the Rev. John A. Williams, a Wesleyan minister, of Toronto, Ont., entitled *Why I Am Not a Swedenborgian*. Possibly you could obtain a copy through the Methodist Book Room of that city. The fullest American work on the subject was written by the Rev. Enoch Pond, D. D., and published by the American Tract Society, but this is also out of print. A very brief synopsis of Mr. Pond's argument is found in an Appendix to *Facts and Theories as to a Future State*, by F. W. Grant, Loizeaux Bros., publishers, New York City. If you have access to Hodge's *Systematic Theology* Vol. II, page 421, you will be interested in his treatment of the errors of Swedenborgianism.

FUNDAMENTAL ERRORS OF RUSSELLISM

What is the fundamental error of Russellism?

All fundamental errors of Christian doctrine usually are concerned with the Person of Christ. Russellism teaches that Christ was a created angel, not God, and that He became only a perfect human being. His human existence ended upon the

Cross. He never rose from the dead and nobody knows what became of His body. Being a mere man no real value attaches to His death. Man will have another chance during the millennium, which will decide whether he will have everlasting life or extinction of existence.

“UNITY” TEACHINGS

What are the teachings of the “Unity” people, whose headquarters are in Kansas City, Mo.?

Man is not fallen. There is no sin, hence no need of the Cross. Denies the essential deity of Jesus Christ and the physical resurrection of the body. For a complete exposition of the false teachings of Unity, see pamphlet by C. E. Putnam—*The Unity School of Christianity*, to be obtained of the Bible Institute Colportage Association, 826 N. La Salle St., Chicago.

MORMONISM

What are the false teachings of Mormonism?

They are so many that we cannot enumerate all. Probably no religion that claims to be based upon the Bible is so utterly opposed to its teachings. As to the Bible, it is only the word of God in so far as it is correctly translated. The Book of Mormon is also the word of God and further revelations may be added at any time. Mormonism believes that God is merely “an exalted Man,” one among many, each of whom has one or more wives. Adam was God and came into Eden with a celestial body, bringing Eve, one of his wives, with him. Redemption is through obedience to the gospel and baptism. All people who are not Latter-Day Saints will be damned. Latter-Day Saints may become gods by gradual development.

What about the “Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints”?

This is only another brand of Mormonism. Aside from polygamy the teachings are practically the same, so far as we have been able to determine. For fuller information secure a copy of *The Real Doctrines of Mormonism* published by the Utah Gospel Mission, of Cleveland, O.

CHAPTER XVIII

PRAYER

PRESENCE OF GOD AND PRAYER

(1) How can I experience the personal presence of God?
(2) Does God really answer prayer? How about the Armenians?

(1) This question is intimately related to the second, for there is no more practical way to realize the presence of God than to be in constant communion with Him through prayer. God always responds to the soul that talks with Him. (2) The godless man ever has asked since the days of Job, "and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" By reading the Bible you will find abundant evidence that God does answer prayer. A book of recent instances of answered prayer is published by The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 826 N. La Salle St., Chicago, Ill., entitled, *"I Cried, He Answered."* This is not saying that there are never any mysteries with regard to unanswered prayers, as in the case of the Armenians. All that we can say is that the Armenian nation as such may have merited judgment because of past sins or unfaithfulness to God, or possibly its martyrdom is for the purpose of witnessing to the gospel.

IN HIS NAME

Should not all of our prayers be made in the name of Jesus, or using some title referring to Him?

Our answer is in the affirmative. The promise of answered prayer is to ask in Christ's name; that is, according to His Person and will (John 15:16). Moreover, He also said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). For one to persistently refuse to pray in that name, as in the case you mention, would seem to indicate that either the person is not a Christian or has been wrongly instructed.

PRAYING THE LORD'S PRAYER

Should a Christian pray the "Lord's Prayer"? Is it not a kingdom prayer? Is it not for Jesus' sake?

We believe it is proper to use this prayer, because every petition in it is for the glory of God. It is a "kingdom prayer"

only in the sense of longing for and of hastening its coming. Surely it is "for Jesus' sake."

Is it right for my pastor to pray "Lead us not into temptation," when we know that God would not do such a thing?

"You should be patient with your pastor who uses the petition, 'Lead us not into temptation,' since it is the rendering of those words of our Lord generally accepted by the Church in all the centuries. There is a sense in which God sometimes leads us into temptation, not to increase our liability to do evil, but to test our faith in Him. Witness for example His testing of Abraham in the case of Isaac, and His testing of His only begotten Son at the hands of Satan in the wilderness. However, the meaning of the phrase is qualified or explained by the phrase which follows it: 'But deliver us from evil,' or the 'Evil One,' as the Revised Version puts it. Therefore the meaning seems to be that we ask God not to suffer us to be overcome by the testing sometimes permitted at the hands of Satan. For a good illustration of this see Luke 22:31, 32, where Satan was permitted to sift Peter as wheat, and yet because of Christ's intercession for him, his faith would not fail" (James M. Gray).

WHY DID CHRIST PRAY?

We can see why prayer was necessary in men's case, but why was it necessary in Christ's case?

Christ prayed because He, too, was truly man. He might have used His divine power to supply His human needs and to carry on His work, as Satan once suggested, but since He assumed the human form and took the human nature in order to do His atoning work, as well as to be our great Exemplar, it was necessary for Him to live as we live, in dependence upon the Father. This dependence involves and includes a life of prayer.

Have we any of the public prayers of Jesus?

While we do not have a recorded public prayer of Jesus, it seems probable that Christ's prayer in the garden was overheard by the disciples (Luke 22:40-46). And doubtless the intercessory prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel was uttered in the presence of His disciples. But the sense of a public prayer, such as Solomon offered at the dedication of the Temple, we have no recorded public prayer of Jesus.

PRAYER OF FAITH

James states that the prayer of faith shall save the sick, yet some of our best Christians are sick and cannot get well; how do you account for it? Is it a mistake in the translation?

No; the translation is correct. The mistake lies with us. God can heal today as easily as in days gone by, but in this matter He is sovereign. It is not for man to dictate to God. The sickness and death of earnest Christians proves this. God's law still is that the prayer of faith shall save the sick. But the prayer of faith is inspired of God and arises not out of our own desires and lack of wisdom. Faith-praying is "praying in the Spirit," according to the mind of God. Such prayer is always answered.

PRAYING FOR FORMALISTS AND UNBELIEVERS

Can we pray in faith for the salvation of formalists and unbelievers?

Your reference to the unbelief of the Nazarenes, which hindered Jesus from doing any mighty works hardly applies here. We are commanded to preach the gospel to every creature, and to sow beside all waters, not knowing who may, or may not, be saved. And such work must always be accompanied by prayer. Indeed, we have the command to pray for all men. Lack of knowledge and apparent impossibilities are a challenge to our faith. Many of the class whom you mention have been saved, hence we are to continue to work and pray that God will be gracious unto the others.

PRAYER IN HEAVEN

Is there such a thing as prayer in heaven? Do any in heaven pray for any upon earth?

One prayer in heaven, and its answer, is recorded in Revelation 6:10, 11. It concerns the earth, but it is a prayer for information and avengement. The prayers of the saints are mentioned in the throne-scene of Revelation 8:1-5. Here again prayer is in connection with judgments upon the earth. But there is One in heaven who is faithfully and effectively praying for the saints upon earth. Christ, our great High Priest, "ever liveth to make intercession for them." As for any others in heaven praying for us we have no record.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SABBATH

THE SABBATH

(1) Is Saturday the Sabbath? (2) Are we commanded to keep it? (3) Why do most Christians keep Sunday as the Sabbath? (4) Is it essential that we study the Old Testament?

(1) Yes; Saturday is the Sabbath. (2) The Jews were commanded to keep it. (3) Christians rightfully observe Sunday because the custom has been handed down from the days of the apostles, and because it is most fitting that the first day of the week should be observed in commemoration of the resurrection of our Lord and His finished work. We would recommend a pamphlet by R. A. Torrey, *Ought Christians to Keep the Sabbath?* (4) By all means Christians should study the Old Testament, both to know about God and the origin of things, to learn about His program for the world, and to better understand the New Testament.

THE JEWISH SABBATH

Do the Jews know for certain that their Sabbath has been handed down without any interruption, so that the Sabbath they now observe is the true one? What is the best book on the subject?

This is not a fact that can be proved one way or the other, for we have not the complete record; but the probability is in favor of it. One of the best books upon the observance of the Lord's Day by Christians instead of the seventh day is *The Complete Testimony of the Early Fathers*, by Rev. D. M. Canright.

CHANGING THE SABBATH

(1) Could the Sabbath of the fourth commandment be changed by any man? (2) Why should it be called the Jewish Sabbath if it was made twenty-five hundred years before the Jewish law existed? (3) Is there any authority in the

Bible for the observance of Sunday instead of the Sabbath?
(4) Did not Constantine change the day of worship?

(1) Impossible, for it was a divine institution. (2) Because incorporated into the Jewish law and made a "sign" between God and the children of Israel (Exod. 31:17). (3) No commandments, but see Luke 24:1, 13, 36; John 20:19, 26; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10. It early became the custom of Christians to observe the first day of the week because it was the day upon which Christ arose from the dead. Gradually it became the great memorial day of the Church. (4) Since Sunday was so universally observed as a day of worship in the early part of the fourth century, the Emperor Constantine enjoined the civil observance of the day. The Council of Nicea, over which he presided, referred to the Lord's Day as the Christian day of prayer or worship. The "Sabbath" was not mentioned in this connection.

THE SABBATH OF LEVITICUS 23:11

Is the Sabbath mentioned in Leviticus 23:11 the Passover Sabbath?

As to whether this was a weekly Sabbath or the Passover Sabbath was a question of dispute among the Jews, the Sadducees and Pharisees taking opposite sides. The Pharisees held that this Sabbath was the Passover Sabbath, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Upon the evening preceding this day, the 14th of Nisan, the sheaf of first-fruits was cut, which marked the beginning of the barley harvest. This offering was made, however, upon the day after this Sabbath, or the 16th of Nisan. It was from this day (the day of the offering of the first-fruits) that seven weeks were to be counted till the Feast of Pentecost (Lev. 23:15, 16). Such was the belief of the Pharisees, and Josephus says this was the custom in his day. But the Sadducees claimed that the Sabbath mentioned in Leviticus 23:11 was a weekly Sabbath. Hence the time of reckoning the Feast of Pentecost, being "the day after," would be our Sunday. But before the Sadducees, the Karaites, a Jewish sect that was found early in the eighth century, held the same interpretation. This view of the Karaites proves that even that far back the accepted view was the same that the Pharisees held in the time of Christ. Nevertheless, since Leviticus 23:16 dates the Feast of Pentecost upon the day after the seventh Sabbath, would not this

be a weekly Sabbath? This is the view held by Mr. C. E. Putnam, who discusses the matter at some length in a pamphlet upon the Sabbath question entitled, *Sunday Observance, or Sinai Seventh-Day Sabbath-Keeping*.

AGAINST KEEPING THE SEVENTH DAY

Should Christians keep the seventh day of the week?

In reply we would quote the testimony of one who was once an ardent Seventh-Day Adventist: "After keeping it, the seventh day, twenty-eight years; after having persuaded more than a thousand others to keep it; after having read my Bible through, verse by verse, more than twenty times; after having scrutinized to the very best of my ability every text, line and word in the whole Bible having the remotest bearing upon the Sabbath question; after having looked up all these, both in the original and in many translations; after having searched in lexicons, concordances, commentaries and dictionaries; after having read armfuls of books on both sides of the question; after having read every line in all the early church fathers upon this point; after having written several works in favor of the seventh day, which were satisfactory to my brethren; after having debated the question more than a dozen times; after seeing the fruits of keeping it, and after weighing all the evidence in the fear of God and of the judgment, I am fully settled in my own mind and conscience that *the evidence is against the keeping of the seventh day*."—Rev. D. M. Canright.

SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

(1) Is Sunday to be regarded as a day of complete inactivity? (2) Is it right for public service companies to operate? (3) What about Sunday picture shows?

(1) Our Lord did not so regard it. (2) In our complex modern life some of them are a necessity. But when used only for business gain or pleasure, their privileges are abused. (3) Most, if not all, have no excuse for existence.

WORKING ON SUNDAY

What Bible passages teach that it is wrong to work upon Sunday, or the first day of the week? What commandment is broken?

We know of no such commandments. But because the Christian Sunday was early substituted by the Church for the Jewish Sabbath, the commandments of the seventh day of the week were naturally transferred to the first day. Besides, since civil governments have made laws to guard the sacredness of the first day of the week, it becomes Christians, who are enjoined to be subject to the powers that be, to have respect to these laws.

We do not feel wise enough to decide what is the duty of each man with reference to occasional work upon Sunday. It were better to devote the entire day to worship, meditation and Christian service. Works of necessity and mercy are always permissible. But in the complexity of our modern civilization each Christian must be guided by the Spirit of God in this matter.

OUR SABBATH REST

Does Hebrews 4:9 have reference to either the Jewish or the Christian Sabbath?

So far as the future is concerned verse nine indicates the nature of the rest. It is to be a Sabbath rest. This has no reference to any particular day of the week, but to the character of the rest. It may have reference to the ideal conditions to be established when Christ returns; but a present rest is also evidently referred to in verse ten. The rest here entered into by the Christian is a rest from his own works. It is the rest of faith (v. 11) instead of works. It is spiritual rather than physical.

CHAPTER XX

SALVATION

GOD'S METHOD OF SALVATION

How are men saved?

Solely by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour (John 3:14-16, 36; John 6:47; Rom. 5:8, 9; 3:24-25). Good works are an evidence of faith but have no merit in regard to our salvation.

Although the Bible says, "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," it is yet possible for one to sin away his day of grace, because repeated refusals to respond to the voice of God gradually makes the ear dull of hearing. Under such conditions the day of grace for that person is past. God wants all to be saved, but He cannot save any one against his will, even though he may be earnestly prayed for.

Must we believe in some particular theory of salvation in order to be saved?

Salvation comes through belief in no particular theory of the atonement. All that is necessary is humble acceptance of the crucified and risen Lord as one's Saviour. Yet, in our judgment, the *moral influence* theory of the atonement, now so commonly held by Modernists, tends to give a wrong conception of the value of the Cross of Christ, and to exalt human effort in the matter of salvation. The more Scriptural theory, in our judgment, is the substitutionary theory.

Is there salvation after death?

The question is an old one, but since this is the hope of the wicked and also the teaching of some who should know better, it is recurrent. So far as any revelation is made in God's Word there is no salvation beyond the grave for those who have rejected Christ here. The eternal life which Christ bestows begins here.

THE CALL TO REPENTANCE

Is the doctrine of repentance to be preached to the Gentiles, or is it only for Jews and Christians?

Since all have sinned, all need to repent and turn to God. Repentance is the negative side of salvation. It is an evidence of true faith. See Luke 24:47; Acts 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; Romans 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:4.

SALVATION OF THE HEATHEN

Does the Bible teach that any among the heathen are saved who die without ever hearing of Jesus Christ? How about Romans 2:12-15?

The passage quoted puts Jew and Gentile upon the same footing. That is, all will be judged according to just standards—the Jew according to the written law, against which he has sinned, and the Gentile according to the law of his conscience, against which he has sinned. The whole world is under condemnation, for all have sinned. If any Jews are saved, it is because of the grace of God in Christ. Should any Gentile in an acceptable way keep the law written upon his heart, there is hope for him also, according to verses 14 and 15. But the moral condition of the heathen world is such that they need the gospel, else Jesus Christ would not have died for them, neither would He have commanded the gospel to be given them. So that although the passage in Romans holds out hope, we cannot affirm that any are saved. Neither can we positively say that all are lost. But the first chapter of Romans teaches that the heathen are “without excuse” (Rom. 1:20-25) because they turned their back on the light they had. The obligation to make Christ known rests upon us who have that knowledge. It would be more fitting were we to condemn ourselves rather than to find fault with God.

DOOM OF REJECTING THE LIGHT

Why did the nations outside of Israel have no means of knowing the way of salvation?

Paul informs us that it was because they willfully turned away from God, and did not wish to retain the true knowledge of Him (Rom. 1:20-25). Yet God was not far from any one of them (Acts 17:27).

WORLD-WIDE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

Must the gospel be preached in all the world before Christ comes for His Church (Matt. 24:14)?

Matthew does not state that the gospel is to be preached in all the world before Christ comes for His Church, but before He returns to the earth in judgment.

SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT

Please explain the Atonement.

Atonement is far more than simply "complete surrender to God of the victim," and its purpose is very different from simply "indicating the absolute duty of the offerer and his possessions to belong to God," as some believe and teach. The wages of sin is death, and sins are not atoned for except by death. Either the sinner or his accepted substitute must suffer the penalty. In Old Testament times animal substitutes were accepted, all sacrifices pointing forward to Christ, "the Lamb of God, which beareth away the sin of the world." Upon the great Day of Atonement one goat was sacrificed to make atonement "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, even all of their sins." The death of the first goat was an absolute necessity. In the case of the second goat the iniquities and sins of the people were laid symbolically upon the animal, which then carried them away into the wilderness. Thus the two goats together typified the perfect atoning work of the sacrificial Lamb of God.

FULL PENALTY PAID

(1) If Christ is our substitute, did He also die the second death? (2) Since the penalty for sin is eternal separation from God, did Christ pay the full penalty for sin?

(1) The second death is the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). If overcomers are to escape it (Rev. 2:11) surely Christ could not have experienced it. (2) Eternal separation from God is only a conditional penalty for sin. It is unnecessary, if we repent and turn to God. But the death of Christ was a full penalty for the sin of the whole world, because of its very nature. In the death upon the Cross God Himself took our place and "became sin for us"; hence He paid the full penalty. No other being could have done so.

NECESSITY OF THE CRUCIFIXION

Why did not the Jews stone Jesus to death as they did Stephen, instead of turning Him over to the Gentiles?

At this period in their history the Jews did not possess the power of death. The stoning of Stephen was illegal. The charge preferred against Jesus was blasphemy, the punishment for which was stoning, but Jesus had prophesied that He would be put to death by crucifixion (John 3:14; 12:32, 33). Such a death was reserved for only the lowest criminals, and in order to save such, Christ subjected Himself to a form of execution that would appeal even to them.

THE LIFE, OR THE BLOOD?

Are we saved by the example of Christ, or by His Cross?

Certain modernists object to the use of the word "blood" in connection with the Christian message. The term they prefer to use is "life." They speak of Christ giving His life, and our being saved by His life. Of course there is a sense in which we are saved by Christ's life (Rom. 5:10), but *that* life is His *present* resurrection-life. In order to be reconciled to God we must first of all be justified by Christ's blood, *i.e.*, the giving up of His life on the cross; then we shall be saved from God's wrath (Rom. 5:8, 9). Those who object to using the word "blood" also object to using the word "wrath" when they refer to Christ's giving His life for us. They do not attach any peculiar saving merit to the Cross of Christ, but have in mind Christ's sacrificial *example*, which we are to follow, and by which we are to be saved. This is wholly unscriptural. We are not saved by Christ's perfect example, but because Jesus Christ shed His blood upon the Cross for our sins.

BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT

What is meant by the language of John 3:5?

The passage has caused commentators no little trouble. Some would not capitalize the word "Spirit"; but since it evidently refers to the Holy Spirit in the next verse it would seem necessarily to refer to Him in verse five also. As to the term "water," of course there is no thought of "baptismal regeneration." Prior to New Testament times water had been embodied in an initiatory rite in the receiving of Jewish proselytes. John the Baptist

also had been employing water as an initiatory rite for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven; and in the Christian Church it was soon to become the visible door of entrance. Water was the symbol of purification. Nicodemus ought not to have needed instruction about these matters, for water and Spirit had been brought together in the evangel proclaimed by the prophet Ezekiel (37:25-27) in connection with the glories of the Kingdom Age, the regeneration of Israel, and the visible reign of the Messiah. In John 7:37-39 we are clearly informed that water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

WATER OF LIFE

Is the "water of life" (Rev. 22:17) for the unsaved?

The language of the first part of the chapter refers to the new earth, but that description ends with verse fifteen. What follows in the concluding messages of the book is of a more general character and has reference to the present age. The invitation of Christ to the thirsty and to the willing is the same as in John 7:37.

HOW WE ARE SAVED

Are we saved by the death of Christ, or by His life?

This question is behind all of the questions now dividing Protestantism. But since salvation deals primarily with sin the answer of the Bible and of the Church always has been that we are saved by the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross. However, another answer is now being given by modern rationalists to the effect that the Cross of Christ was simply an appeal and an inspiration to pattern our lives after His sacrificial life. According to this the death of Christ as an atonement for sin is abolished. We of course hold to the plain teaching of Scripture as above stated.

SAVED BY HOLINESS, OR BY THE CROSS?

If Col. 1:15 in its connection has reference to verifying our holiness, why is there any reference to Christ's human body here?

Neither the verse in question nor the context has any reference to holiness. The fourteenth verse distinctly says, "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." What we have here is redemption, not holiness. We

are redeemed through His blood; that is, through His death upon the Cross, and neither through His holiness nor through "verifying our holiness." In order to redeem us through His blood the incarnation was necessary. He must have a human body. The eternal Son of God, who was "before all things" (v. 17) must take the human form and nature. This is clearly stated in verses 21 and 22. "And you . . . hath he now reconciled in the body of his flesh through death." We are not saved by the holiness of His character nor by our own holiness, but through His crucified body. There is no peace between sinners and God save "through the blood of His cross" (v. 20).

GOD'S METHOD OF SALVATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

How were people saved before Christ?

God's remedy for sin is the shed blood of the innocent but appointed and accepted Lamb. Christ died for our sins, the righteous for the unrighteous. The law of redemption for Old Testament times, as well as for the New, is, "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). Christ was manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26). The same law of substitutionary sacrifice prevailed during Old Testament times. There was no approach to God and no provision for sin except through animal sacrifices, which typified and pointed forward to Christ the Lamb of God. The experience of salvation is achieved by faith.

REGENERATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

(1) Is there any teaching in the Old Testament on regeneration? (2) Were the Old Testament saints born-again men? (3) When did the dispensation of grace begin? (4) Was John the Baptist regenerated? (5) Were the apostles regenerated when Christ was still with them? (6) If born again, were they not in the Kingdom of God? (7) But how could they be in it, since it had not come before Christ?

(1) The rebuke given to Nicodemus for his seeming ignorance of the new birth implies that, as a teacher in Israel, he should have been familiar with it (John 3:10). Christ's Old Testament illustration (John 3:15) reveals the way. (2) Yes. (3) Usually dated from the Day of Pentecost. (4, 5) In all probability. (6, 7) They were in the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of

God is all-embracing. It was in Old Testament times as well as in the New. The Kingdom of Heaven, proclaimed by John, by Jesus, and by the apostles (Matt. 11:11, 12) was only a phase of the Kingdom of God in its fullest aspect.

THE DISPENSATIONS AND SALVATION

What do the seven dispensations have to do with the saving of people?

The dispensations bear upon the salvation of the race as a whole, and also of different portions of the race in the different dispensations. From the beginning God's plan of salvation included the race, and also the redemption of the material world, which was cursed for man's sake. Each age carries forward God's program of redemption. The age preceding ours, or the Mosaic age, was the age of divine law, in which salvation was offered to the Jewish nation in particular. Our age, the Church Age, is the reign of divine grace, in which salvation is freely and universally offered to the individual. The next age of God's dealings with man is the Kingdom Age, or the age of glory, which is to complete the redemption of the world and be followed by the new heaven and new earth.

FAITH AND REGENERATION

Can we have faith before we are regenerated, or does regeneration precede faith?

Before we are regenerated we cannot have faith as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:9), but "saving faith" precedes regeneration. The Bible order is, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." That we may exercise this faith, the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us as Saviour, or as the object of our faith. When in faith we turn to Him and trust Him to save us, then the Holy Spirit does His next work for us by entering our hearts and creating us anew. Thus our salvation is "all of grace."

SALVATION BELIEFS

Can a man believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour who rejects the Bible teaching that God created man in His own image? Can a man experience salvation or the grace of regeneration who denies that man is a special creation of God according to Genesis?

While belief in the Bible as the Word of God includes the account of the creation of man in His own image, this belief is not essential to salvation. The experience of salvation through regeneration, or a new creation, depends solely upon our belief in Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. Personal belief in Jesus Christ as the one who has power to re-create those who are "dead in trespasses and sins" is the only essential requisite to regeneration.

DID CHRIST REDEEM HIMSELF?

Please explain Hebrews 13:20 in connection with the statement upon page 44 of Pratt's *Studies in the Book of Genesis* that Christ "had necessarily to redeem Himself."

The passage in Hebrews does not speak of the redemption, but of the resurrection of Christ. While it is true, as Mr. Pratt quotes, that "Jehovah laid on him the iniquity of us all," and that, too, in a very real sense, we fail to see how Christ would therefore need to make any atonement for Himself. Atonement and redemption are for sinners. The fact that Christ was our sin-bearer in no way made Him a sinner who needed redemption for Himself. It was only because of His sinlessness that He was fitted to be the Redeemer of others. Our sins being laid upon Him, although "He could not get rid of them," could not possibly have any moral effect upon Him. Christ took the sinner's place and died in his stead, but in doing so, He did not need to "redeem Himself," for He was sinless.

Hebrews 13:20 should be interpreted in the light of Hebrews 9:14-18 and 2:9. Christ offered Himself "without blemish" to God "through the eternal Spirit." Therefore His blood is efficacious. It seals the "eternal covenant" with the Father. He "tasted death for every man," made redemption possible for all, and therefore is now "crowned with glory and honor."

HOUSEHOLD SALVATION

(1) What is meant by the salvation of the household? Genesis 7:1; Acts 11:14; 16:31. (2) When was Cornelius saved?

(1) In the case of Noah we know who were included in his "house"—eight souls in all. But who were embraced in the household of Cornelius and of the Philippian jailer we cannot positively affirm. No doubt the adults of his immediate family,

and possibly servants. By inference there may have been children also, but of this we cannot be sure. The Holy Spirit was given to those who believed (v. 17).

(2) Cornelius was a devout man, one who feared God, who gave alms and prayed to God (Acts 10:2), yet he was conscious of something lacking (v. 6). In our judgment he was not a saved man until he received the gift of the Holy Ghost (v. 45).

SALVATION OF INFANTS

Are all children who die before or soon after birth, and unbaptized, lost?

Of course mere water baptism would save none of them, but we believe they are saved. Although inheriting a sinful nature and needing regeneration (Eph. 2:3) special provision has been made for them. They who die in infancy or before being able to choose right and wrong, are not morally accountable, and receive salvation from Christ as certainly as they inherit sin from Adam (Rom. 5:19-21). We cannot believe that God will eternally condemn those who are incapable of exercising faith in Christ. His love for babes excludes any thought of unjust condemnation (Matt. 19:13, 14).

SAVING THE SAVED

What is meant by "saving the saved"?

In itself the expression is a self-contradiction. If one is saved he cannot be more saved, or saved over again. There is a sense, however, in which our salvation is progressive, and in this sense we need continually applied to us the saving power of the gospel.

DEALING WITH INQUIRERS

(1) How would you deal with a man who claims to have met all the conditions of salvation, especially the public confession of sin, but who is not saved? (2) How deal with a man who says he wants to become a Christian, but cannot believe in some of the events in the Bible, and especially in Jesus Christ and God? (3) How deal with one who cannot see why it was necessary for Christ to die in order that men may be saved?

This man's first difficulty, according to your letter, seems to be that he has been trying to put works before faith, or instead of faith. Confession of sin is all right in its place, but for the

sinner repentance and turning away from sin are the more necessary. What the sinner needs to confess is "Jesus as Lord" (Rom. 10:9, R. V.). But before this confession must be the *belief* of the *heart* (Rom. 10:10). That is, belief on Jesus Christ as Saviour and subjection to Him as Lord must precede the confession of Him. The second mistake, apparently, was to depend upon some deep emotion or feeling to follow the public confession of his sins. He has looked for the "real joy of salvation." God's way of salvation is to "believe," not "feel." Feeling will come in due time if there has been real faith, but it does not always accompany faith. Use texts which emphasize *believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ. (2) The first need of this man is conviction as to his own sins. His intellectual difficulties will probably vanish soon after he gets right with God. Use Scripture to convict him of sin and of his own helplessness, then lead Him to the Lamb of God, who taketh away sin. (3) It is not necessary to understand the philosophy of redemption in order to be saved. There are indeed reasonable explanations of God's plan of salvation, but an understanding of this plan will not save men. Have him put Christ to the test. An experience of His saving power will open his eyes as to why it was necessary for Him to die in order to become the Saviour of men.

THE BACKSLIDER

How can you get one back to the Lord who doubts he can get back, since he was once filled with the Spirit?

He must come in faith just as he did at the first, believing Christ's promise, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

METHOD OF CONFESSING FAITH IN CHRIST

Should unbelievers be asked to show their faith simply by raising the hand, or by partaking of the Lord's Supper?

No dependence should be placed upon any single method of expressing one's faith in the Lord Jesus. This person may come to Christ one way and that person another way. We are not saved by a method, but by Christ. But although Christ's invitation to the weary and heavy laden (Matt. 11:28, 29) is so free and gracious, because such need great encouragement, His rule was to portray the hardship of following Him. He did not make it easy to enter into His service. There must be counting

of the cost, the giving up of all, the forsaking of all (Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-35). Sinners need encouragement, but if being a Christian means no more than raising the hand, we should say that the method is too easy. Salvation is cheapened. It cost Christ the shame and agony of the Cross to provide salvation, and we should be willing to do the hard thing, if need be, to obtain it.

LOSING ONE'S SALVATION

Can a person who has been truly saved ever lose his salvation and be eternally lost?

Such a question implies that salvation is something like a bit of jewelry that may be stolen or carelessly dropped and never found; or like an experience which passes away with the subsiding of the emotions. While eternal life is a gift it cannot be detached from us, but becomes an essential part of our being.

The trouble with such a question lies in thinking of salvation as something apart from the person himself, or else it is in not clearly understanding just what salvation is. A person may fall into the water and be saved repeatedly, and this seems to be the conception some have of being saved in the Bible sense. But salvation implies regeneration, or the remaking of the individual, so that he is a new creature in Christ. Christ's life is imparted to him. This new life is eternal life, and possesses the qualities of eternity. Either we have eternal life because born of God's Spirit, or we are unsaved and never have been regenerated. But being saved does not mean that we can never again sin, because the Christian, though a new creature, still has with him the old nature, which sometimes may re-assert itself. We believe in constant victory over sin, but not in sinless perfection.

IMMORTALITY AND ETERNAL LIFE

Immortality seems to be ascribed only to Christ (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16) and to Christians (Rom. 2:7). How then can it be possessed by the unregenerate?

The word for immortality in 1 Timothy 1:7 and in Romans 2:7 is more accurately translated "incorruption" in the Revised Version. The Greek word is different in 1 Timothy 6:16, a word which can apply only to Christ—"Who only hath immortality." That is, in Himself, or not by impartation or creation. *All* men have immortality, or the quality of unending existence,

so far as their souls are concerned. But eternal life is something quite different. It is the result of a new creation and includes spirit, soul, and body. Therefore the unregenerate, in a sense, have immortality, but not eternal life.

SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

Is it possible for one who was saved, became a soul-winner, and afterwards a backslider, to so harden his heart and sin against the Holy Spirit as to be finally lost?

When a person is born from above by the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit he cannot be lost, because he has become partaker of the divine nature, and also because God is able to keep him. But in considering this matter two things must be borne in mind. First, that a person may seem to be a true follower of Christ and yet all the time be a child of Satan, as was the case with Judas. Second, that a true follower of Christ may deny Him and backslide, as was the case with Peter. In the case of those who, like Peter, deny their Lord, but yet are truly His, we believe they will be brought to a keen consciousness of their sin and repent. The way back to God is always open to those who truly repent of their sins. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." But believers in "eternal security" need to hold this doctrine so as to give no ground for presumptive living.

AN APOSTATE

What is an apostate? Just what does the word mean? Would an apostate have a desire to repent? Can one who has been born again become an apostate?

The word apostate comes from the Greek. Its general meaning is *to fall away from*. An apostate is one who has borne the name of Christian, but who now has left the ranks of Christians. He may become an avowed enemy of the Cross, or the defection may be only in secret. Such an one, in our judgment, never experienced the saving grace of God and has become antichristian. It seems doubtful from Hebrews 6:4-6 whether such an one ever would repent and be saved.

SANCTIFIED APOSTATES

In what sense can an apostate be said to be sanctified as in Hebrews 10:29?

The entire passage (vv. 26-38) teaches the possibility of apostatizing from the truth. God has no pleasure in such (v. 38) and they have only a fearful future to which they can look forward (vv. 26-31). How then can such people be described as sanctified (v. 29)? Evidently the word is used in the same sense as in verse 10, and the explanation seems to be that even professors of religion who follow Christ only for a time are in a limited sense sanctified. That is, they outwardly are set apart for the work of the Lord, the same as others. Later, the difference is revealed in their apostasy. A similar truth is stated in 2 Peter 2:1, where false teachers are referred to as "denying the Lord who bought them"; "bought" by Christ, yet false to Him.

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

What Scriptural assurance of salvation is there for me, for I have not wholly followed my Lord? The only assurance I have is based upon Christ's command to forgive.

We have not the space in which to answer the many passages which trouble you, most of which, however, seem to have no particular application to your need. According to your own testimony you evidently were saved when a young woman, but afterwards there came a period when you did not wholly follow your Lord. You realize this, have repented, and now love the Lord and love His Word. Did He not say, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37)? Since you have come to Him, He surely has kept His word and received you. You now believe on Him as you never believed before, hence you *now* have eternal life (John 6:47; 10:28). For your comfort and assurance see also the following passages: Romans 8:35-39; 1 John 1:9; 4:15; 5:1; Jude 24.

ETERNAL SECURITY

Please reconcile John 10:27, 28 with Matthew 10:22; 24:11-13; Galatians 5:3, 4; 1 Timothy 1:19; 5:12; Hebrews 3:14; Revelation 2:10; 3:15, 16.

In the passages in Matthew salvation is not offered as reward of merit upon our part, for salvation always is a free gift. The enduring to the end is rather a proof of possession. In Galatians Paul is not speaking of losing one's salvation, but simply showing the folly of forsaking the way of salvation through grace and seeking it through keeping the law. In 1 Timothy 1:19

Paul is describing a reprobate, one who deliberately abandons "the faith," which is sure proof that he never had experienced its saving power. The same is true of 5:12. The crown of life is a reward for endurance even unto death. Salvation is never offered as a reward for anything man can do. It is "not of works." The Laodicean church members gave no evidence whatever of ever having been regenerated. They were wholly self-centered and self-satisfied.

A CASTAWAY

How do you harmonize John 5:24 with 1 Corinthians 9:27?

The first reference teaches the eternal security of believers, but when Paul writes to the Corinthian Christians about the possibility of himself being a "castaway" after he has preached to others, he is not referring to the matter of his personal salvation (many other passages refer to that) but to the matter of reward for service. He is talking about winning prizes and crowns. It is his purpose so to run, and so to bring his body into subjection, that he shall not fail to be duly rewarded for service, instead of being "disapproved."

QUESTIONS ABOUT SALVATION

(1) If a Christian should die without being baptized, would he be saved? (2) Will heathen people be judged according to the same standard as those who have heard the gospel? (3) Will those who never heard the gospel be eternally lost? (4) Does Hebrews 6:4-6 teach that there is no hope for the backslider? (5) Ought we to confess our sins to man, as well as to God?

(1) If really "born again" by the Holy Spirit, yes. Water baptism is the initiatory rite which brings one into fellowship with the visible church. But if one calls himself a Christian and yet persistently refuses to be baptized, it may be reasonably questioned whether he really is a Christian. (2) Not the same. See Romans 2:14, 15. (3) All are under condemnation, for all have sinned. There is a possibility that the grace of God may contrive a way to save some, but of this we have no assurance. Instead, we are commanded to give them the Gospel. (4) Adopting the phrase, "the while they crucify" (R. V.) there is a ray of hope that the way is open for their return, should they cease to crucify Christ. (5) If the sin has wronged a fellow man, it should be confessed to him also.

CHAPTER XXI

SATAN

WHERE IS SATAN?

Is Satan now in heaven, as some teach?

First of all, Satan is not now in hell; neither is he yet bound for a thousand years (Rev. 20:2). He has not yet met his final doom (Rev. 20:10). But it is not strictly accurate to say that Satan is now in heaven, as that term is generally understood. That is, he does not dwell in the upper heaven, where Christ and the saints and angels are. Rather is he in the upper regions of the air. He is said to be "prince of the power of the air." This does not mean that he has control of the elements, but that he is at the head of the organized forces of evil spirits who inhabit those regions and against whom we contend (Eph. 6:11, 12). From his present position Satan has access to the presence of God in order to accuse the brethren (Rev. 12:10), and also access to the earth in order to deceive men (Rev. 12:9). See *Satan and the Saint*, by Dr. James M. Gray.

SATAN'S CONTROL OVER THE ELEMENTS

Does Satan have control over the forces of nature?

In the first chapter of Job (vv. 16-19) he might appear to have, but the temporary use or manipulation of the forces of nature does not prove that Satan has supreme control. That power belongs only to God. Your reference to Ephesians 2:2 reveals Satan's power in an altogether different sphere. He is indeed "prince of the power of the air," but in this instance the reference is to evil spirits, to "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (See Eph. 6:12, R. V.)

CASTING DOWN OF SATAN

Has Satan yet been cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:10; Luke 10:18; John 12:31)?

We are not to understand that Satan is in heaven where Christ is, but that he is in the "heavenly places" and is the "prince of

the power of the air." There he has access to God as the "accuser" of the brethren (Rev. 12:10). We are safe from his attacks so far as our salvation is concerned (Rom. 8:30-35) but this fact does not prevent his false accusations, nor his attempting to destroy us. Satan is yet to be cast out of heaven and down to the earth (Rev. 12:7-9). We regard the statements in Luke 10:18 and John 12:31 as anticipatory rather than actual.

SATAN'S WORK IN US

Is Satan cast out of the Christian, or suppressed, or rendered inoperative?

Satan is not in the Christian, for Christ is in us, the hope of glory. But Satan is not yet bound, and hence is free to influence us if we will listen to him. The new man in Christ Jesus Satan has no power to touch, but he still may reach us through the old nature, or the natural man. To the degree to which we yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God, Satan's power over us is rendered inoperative.

(1) Can Satan hear us think? Or does he simply learn from our actions and follow them with evil suggestions?
(2) If he can take possession of the sinner, how does he work upon a Christian?

(1) We cannot affirm that Satan knows what is going on within our minds; nor can we deny, when we recall the mind-reading powers that some people seem to possess. If he does not possess the power to "hear us think," he certainly possesses the power of quickly finding out, and suggesting evil thoughts and courses of action. **(2)** Satan works upon us directly, as in the case of Eve; or through companions, even our most intimate friends. His apostles are "angels of light."

DEMON POSSESSION

Are lunatics and the demon-possessed the same?

Demon possession is not to be explained by mere lunacy. Lunatics are people with deranged minds, while demon possession is the use of the body by an evil spirit, who enters the body and controls it.

CHAPTER XXII

SIN

ORIGIN OF SIN

Where did sin originate? Where did that spirit come from that entered into Satan while he was in heaven?

The origin of sin is enshrouded in mystery, but so far as we know it originated in the desire and came to fruition in the decision of Satan to substitute his will for the will of God. This appears to be intimated in Ezekiel 28:15, 17. In other words, the sin of Satan originated in his own heart and will.

CAN A SINLESS BEING SIN?

If man was created in holiness and was perfect, how could he have sinned?

Possessing the power of choice it was possible for man to choose evil, as in the case of Adam, although he was created sinless.

SIN OF THE WORLD

What is the meaning of the phrase, "sin of the world," in the announcement of John the Baptist concerning Jesus (John 1:29)?

The designation of Jesus as "the Lamb of God" gives us the key. The paschal lamb evidently was in John's mind, which was primarily a sin-offering. The death of the Passover lamb provided salvation for those who trusted in its blood. As the first Passover meant the redemption of Israel, so John sees in Christ the Passover that provides redemption for the sin of the world, or the extension of merits of the crucified Lamb to all the Gentiles. Not that the sins of the world are actually removed, whether men will or not, but that the atonement made by Christ is sufficient to cover those sins. The sacrifice of the Lamb of God becomes individually effective only through faith in His blood; that is, in His atoning sacrifice upon the Cross.

DEBT OF SIN

Why is sin like a debt we owe?

God lays lawful and righteous obligations upon all men for their own good. Because of our relationship to Him and our dependence upon Him, it is our duty to meet these obligations. When we are in arrears we owe Him a debt. On account of sin men are always in debt. But while "debts" are primarily sins of omission, every sin of transgression implies non-fulfilment of duty; and while many of these debts are due to sins against our neighbors, they are all debts which we have incurred to God, debts which we can never repay. We have nothing to pay them with. God, in His wondrous grace, has provided a way for forgiveness of all our debts to Him. His law of cancelling indebtedness is, *confess and receive remission*. This, however, is because Jesus Christ has paid the penalty of our indebtedness and cancelled the sins of those who are righteous in Him.

SIN UNTO DEATH

What is the "sin unto death" (1 John 5:16)?

Compare 1 Corinthians 11:31; Acts 5:1-11; James 5:14, 15. If the sin is not unto death as a physical chastisement, we can pray for the brother and he will be restored. The words of John do not refer to the salvation of the soul.

POSSIBILITY OF SINNING

Do Christians commit sin?

The question is the title of a pamphlet sent to us for examination. The author's answer is in the negative. They do not sin, because they cannot. Does not John say so in 1 John 3:9? But a more correct interpretation of this passage is, does not "practice." The love of sin is foreign to the Christian's new nature. Sin is abhorrent to the one who is born of God. But this is not saying that the sinful principle is completely eradicated, which is contrary both to Scripture and experience.

Note the narrowness of the author's definition of sin, namely, either willful violation of a known command, or willful neglect of a known duty. Sinful thoughts and desires are not included. Then, too, the author's conception of what it means to be born of God enters into his interpretation of his text, which he modifies by saying, "*while his seed remaineth in him he cannot sin*"

(p. 6). That is, "when you do sin, you simply testify that you have lost the divine nature, and are no longer a child of God, but a child of the Devil." Did the author as a boy cease to be a child of his earthly father when he told a lie? Divine sonship is not a thing to be lost one moment, and regained the next.

You ask for the explanation of certain texts. Romans 6:6 teaches that because of federal union with Christ we were crucified with Him, hence we are to "reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin and alive unto God" (v. 1) in order that sin shall not "reign" in our mortal bodies (v. 12). Sin may be present, but must not be ascendant. "They that are in the flesh" (Rom. 8:8, 9) means that the old fallen nature dominates the life. This should not be, for there is victory over the flesh (the old nature) through the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 5, 13; Col. 2:11). Outward circumcision is not needed, for the Christian already has been circumcised in his heart, and the "body of the flesh" (R. V.) (the old nature) has been put off by Him who has raised us to newness of life. Galatians 2:20, "crucified," yet alive. No longer the old man, but the new man in Christ Jesus. In this new life Christ so absorbs me that my own will, desires, plans are His. My old self is dead.

PROMISED PERFECTION

What is the teaching of Matthew 5:48 as to perfection?

The perfection here referred to is not that of degree, but of kind. The "therefore" intimately connects this verse with what precedes. If children of the Father in heaven (v. 45) our standards of life must be of the highest. We should not be satisfied with any perfection short of the divine. But the revised text turns this seemingly impossible thing into a promise, and we may so regard it: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." As children of the Father, as those who are called to be conformed to the image of Christ, we one day are to be made like Him. Meanwhile we are to pattern our lives after the perfect standard.

HOLINESS

What do you teach about holiness, the new birth, and the new theology?

As to holiness, or sanctification, we believe that positionally we are sanctified when we are regenerated; that we are con-

tinually being sanctified as we grow in grace and knowledge; that we shall be completely sanctified when the body is redeemed. No, we do not believe in complete eradication of sin, as the result of a "second blessing."

THE CHRISTIAN'S TWO NATURES

Since the old nature is not eradicated in regeneration, and since this old nature is satanic, then do we not have two natures—the nature of God and the nature of the Devil? Does not this make the Christian a member of two families? Does not Satan have a right to rule over his nature? Does not this doctrine make the Christian legally a child of Satan as well as a child of God? Are we not only partially redeemed?

You go too far in thinking that the old nature is satanic. The old nature is the carnal nature in us, in distinction from the spiritual. Thus the Christian has two natures, but is not two personalities, and is not a member of two families, except they be the human family and the divine. Furthermore, Satan has no rights even over the old nature. Whenever the old nature re-asserts itself and we sin, Satan has a momentary triumph, yet by no right or power of his own. There is a sense in which we were redeemed when we were born again; but since our redemption is eventually to include our glorified bodies, Christ's work in us will not be completed before the time of the resurrection. His work upon the Cross was a finished work, and even now He gives us victory over the "old man" in us, but we are not yet sinless. The old nature has not yet been completely transformed. We are saved and safe, but not yet perfected.

THE CARNALLY-MINDED CHRISTIAN

Is the carnally-minded Christian lost if he should die in ignorance of his carnality?

It was a great grief to the Apostle Paul that he could not address the Christians in Corinth as spiritual, but as carnal (1 Cor. 3:1). The Christian has two natures, the old and the new, the carnal and the spiritual. Sometimes one is uppermost and sometimes the other. Of course this ought not to be, yet the fact remains that sometimes Christians will walk after the flesh, and thus be carnal, rather than after the Spirit. Your question then, in another form, is, "If a Christian should die while he

were living upon the lower plane, instead of the higher, would he be lost?" Our answer is the same as Paul gives in the closing words of this very chapter, verses 29-39. If the believer has been justified by God, he will also be glorified in the good time to come. Nothing shall be able to separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

(1) How do you explain Luke 7:47? (2) Also James 4:17?

(1) The basis of forgiveness is not love, but faith (v. 50). Neither is love possible without some degree of antecedent faith; therefore the interpretation that seems most probable is that the love of the woman was prompted by a devotion springing from an incipient faith, and that her sense of gratitude was closely connected with the consciousness of her many sins. The Pharisee probably had as many sins to be forgiven, but in his own eyes they were few. The general principle is stated in the latter part of the verse. (2) Sin consists not only in actual transgressions of God's laws, but in not keeping them. Knowledge of what God wants us to do imposes the responsibility of so doing. There are passive sins as well as active. Refusing to do what we know God wants us to do is as much a sin as doing what we know God does not want us to do.

THE SINNER'S NATURE

(1) Is the sinner a trinity or just body and soul, receiving the spirit at regeneration? (2) Does the sinner receive the Holy Spirit at regeneration or just a new life from God?

(1) The sinner is a three-fold being, possessing a spirit, a soul, and a body. But sin has darkened and deadened the spirit, so that the sinner is not conscious of God, i. e., he is dead to Him, being "dead in trespasses and sins." When man fell his spirit lost its place of supremacy, and his soul, or self-consciousness, began to rule. The life of God in his spirit was supplanted by the natural life. (2) At regeneration the Holy Spirit enters and restores the human spirit to its place of original supremacy, and more. At that time divine life is implanted in the human spirit. A new creation is wrought and new life-processes begin to operate also in the soul and body.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

What is the meaning of Mark 3:28, 29?

Verse 28 is a marvelous statement of the limitless forgiveness of sins. It is God's desire that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (v. 29) is not forgivable. This is not because His Person is more sacred than that of either the Father or the Son, but because when one sins against the Holy Spirit he has sinned against the fullest light of truth that is possible for God to give. To ascribe the work of Christ to Satan or to an evil spirit (v. 30) is such a sin. If a man willfully rejects such light as only the Holy Spirit can give, there is positively nothing left that God can do for him, and thus the sin is eternal in its consequences. A word of caution may be added, namely, if one is concerned about having committed this sin, it probably is an indication that the Holy Spirit has not been grieved entirely away.

IMPOSSIBILITY OF SINNING

Please explain 1 John 3:9.

"Commit" is better rendered "practice." This places the emphasis upon the life, rather than upon a single act. The divinely implanted life in us is opposed to sin. That is, sinning is not compatible with the Christian's new nature. It is not the disposition of the "new man." In Christ we died; now if we sin it is contrary to the spirit of Christ who is within us (Gal. 2:20). It is the "old man," as opposed to the "new man" (Rom. 7:20; Eph. 4:22-24). Since there is no sin in Christ, then to the extent that we abide in Him we shall not continue in sin (1 John 3:5, 6).

SIN AND ERADICATION

(1) Do we inherit a sinful nature through Adam? (2) Is provision made for its complete eradication during this life? (3) Do we need to have pure hearts to get to heaven? How can we, if the sin principle is not eradicated? (4) What is the distinction between the "ungodly" and the "sinner" in 1 Peter 4:18?

(1) Yes. Romans 5:12. (2) No; only for victory over sin. (3) Only the "pure in heart" can see God, either now, or in the future life; that is, they who have right desires and affections

or, in other words, regenerated men. But, thinking only of heaven, the sin principle will then, of course, have been eradicated. (4) "Ungodly" means simply irreligious, while the word "sinner" represents the more positive sin-lovers.

AN EXCLUDING SIN

What was the sin that kept Moses and Aaron out of the promised land?

The sin of self-glorification and failing to give the glory to God for the miracle He wrought through Moses at Meribah (Num. 20:10, 12).

FUTURE PUNISHMENT OF SIN

How shall we understand the language of Revelation 14:10?

"Tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" is indeed strong language. Modern teachers of "sweetness and light" no doubt object to it. But the torture is described, and it is also said to be continuous (v. 11). Its occurrence in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb would seem to indicate their approval. God's judgments are just. We cannot understand them all, nor harmonize them with His love, but shall we not in humility and faith bow before them?

HOSTILE ORDINANCES

What is meant by "ordinances that war against us" (Colossians 2:14)?

These ordinances, or decrees, are the penalties imposed on account of our sins; such as, "The wages of sin is death." God did not simply cancel these ordinances against the Christian by an act of divine mercy, but Christ utterly destroyed them when He was nailed to the Cross.

THE MAN OF SIN

Will you kindly explain 2 Thessalonians 2:7, especially the latter part?

A better translation is "only until he that restraineth be taken out of the way." This restraining one is thought by some to be the Holy Spirit working through the Church. The rapture of the Church will assuredly be the occasion for a mighty outburst

of evil, headed up by the Antichrist. But the question arises, If this be the explanation of the restraining power, why should Paul speak so cautiously and enigmatically about it? This attitude of Paul has led others to believe that the restraining power was the Roman Empire which Paul deemed it unwise to attack. In Paul's day when this power was supreme, the Antichrist, or "lawless one," could not in his worst form make himself known. But at the end of the age, when the ten kings of the Roman Empire give their authority to the Beast, and so withdraw the restraining influence of the empire, the "lawless one" will be fully manifested. Whatever interpretation we give to the passage, it will not be wholly free from difficulty or objection. Probably only the fulfilment of the prophecy will fully clear up the passage.

CHAPTER XXIII

WOMEN

CONCERNING WOMEN

What is the position of women in the Church?

Paul lays down the general principle of woman in subjection to man, as symbolized among the Greeks by the wearing of a veil. A woman who wore no veil was considered immodest or even immoral. Especially would it be an impropriety for an unveiled woman to pray or to speak in public. In 1 Corinthians 11:16 Paul appeals to the general custom among the churches. In a modern Christian community the same restrictions would seem out of place, yet the principle holds. If, however, the literal instructions be followed, the veil should be used and not a mere bonnet or other head covering.

Concerning speaking or teaching in public, this is forbidden under certain conditions. For example, there should be no disturbance of the meeting. In 1 Corinthians 11:5 the praying and prophesying are permitted, only they must be done with that becoming modesty and decorum which the customs of the time and place require. Prophesying here means testimony or exhorting, not foretelling future events.

In 1 Timothy 2:11, 12, Paul is dealing especially with the relation of married women to their husbands. Women are not to be in authority in the Church over their husbands.

WOMEN PREACHERS

- (1) What does the Bible teach about women preachers?
- (2) What do the Scriptures teach is woman's sphere in life?
- (3) Does the Lord ever guide contrary to this sphere in exceptional cases?

(1) If by "preachers" you mean women who were officially ordained to be "elders" or "bishops," we do not know of any such instances in the Bible. (2) Unquestionably the sphere of woman presented in the Bible is the home sphere—but she may also serve Christ outside of the home. (3) Yes; in exceptional cases. For example, Miriam and Hulda in the Old Testament,

and possibly the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9) and Priscilla (Acts 18:18, 26) in the New Testament.

WOMEN AS TEACHERS

In the light of 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 shall I stop teaching doctrine in the Sunday-school and stop speaking in prayer-meetings?

We reply "No" to both questions. These two passages must not be interpreted so as to deny the permission granted in 1 Corinthians 11:3. In 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 only a conditional silence is enjoined. Spiritual gifts are to be exercised by women as well as by men, but in a becoming and not disorderly manner. In relation to her husband, however, the woman is to assume the place of learner, particularly in public, so as to preserve "quietness" (1 Tim. 2:12). The wise woman will never assume the place of authority, official or otherwise, over her husband.

CHAPTER XXIV

MISCELLANEOUS

THE ANGEL LADDER

What is the meaning of John 1:51?

The figure probably is taken from Jacob's dream (Gen. 28:12). The meaning seems to be that through the incarnation and ascension of Christ the way is opened for free communication between heaven and earth. The Son of Man becomes the connecting ladder.

COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES

Will you please give me some passages of Scripture for the comfort of those into whose homes death has come?

We suggest John 14; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 1:3-6; 5:1-9; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. You might be helped by a small pamphlet by Dr. Gray, entitled, *Shall the Saints Know Each Other in the Life Beyond?* Bible Institute Colportage Association, 826 N. La Salle St., Chicago (5 cents).

RETURN OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT

What is the teaching of Matthew 12:43-45 about the unclean spirit?

What is described here is not a bad temper or some sinful habit, but an evil personality, a demon, who has come out of a man, finds no rest or satisfaction elsewhere and decides to return. Upon investigation he finds his former quarters "empty, swept, and garnished." Being unclean himself the spirit had left the place unclean and bare. Meanwhile the man has reformed and "cleaned up." But he is "empty," not Christ-possessed. The evil spirit takes advantage of the situation and returns with other demons even more wicked than himself.

FAMILIAR SPIRITS

"Familiar" spirits are evil spirits, or demons, who take possession of mediums. "Trying" is testing the spirits (or teachers,

as 1 John 4:1 means, in order to determine whether they are inspired by the Spirit of God or are impostors. The test is that of character or of the teaching. In our opinion a person who is a spiritist is either not a Christian, or is a very weak or ignorant one.

DEFINITIONS

Will you please define or explain the following terms for hell: Sheol, Hades, Gehenna, Tartarus.

Sheol is the word in the Old Testament that means the place of the departed souls. Hades in the New Testament has the same meaning. Gehenna is used figuratively for the place of everlasting punishment. Tartarus is the "lowest place in Hades," place of eternal punishment.

What is the difference between endless being, eternal life, and immortality?

"Endless being" applies to all mankind, and means unending existence. "Immortality" contains the same truth, but has also a more restricted meaning; as when applied to God (1 Tim. 6:16), and to Christians when possessing their resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15:53). "Eternal life" is a gift to those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; possessing which, we at once become partakers of the divine nature and enter into the joys of eternal salvation.

FORTUNE TELLING

What is the teaching of Scripture upon the subject of fortune telling?

The question is covered in Deuteronomy 18:10-14. Whatever may be the practice of others in this matter, God's people are commanded not to pry into their future through persons who profess to have occult powers of any kind. Such practices are an "abomination unto the Lord." God has placed at our disposal a much superior wisdom (James 1:5). Moreover, He has given us the enlightenment and guidance of the Holy Spirit. If God has not fully revealed the future to us, it is because He wants us to walk by faith with Him. Such a life and such a companionship are far better than any information imparted by a fortune teller, which may or may not be reliable and is as often misleading as otherwise. See *Spiritism and the Fallen Angels*—Gray.

THEORY OF EVOLUTION

What is your attitude towards the theory of evolution?

Our general attitude towards evolution is that it is still an unproved hypothesis. There are many varieties of evolutionists from the materialistic to the theistic, but none of them do justice to God as the Creator and Governor of His universe.

THEISTIC EVOLUTION

Some who reject the theory of organic evolution still wish to be respectably "modern." So they compromise and call themselves "theistic evolutionists." They claim that evolution is simply God's way of working. That "theism" and "evolution" are contradictory terms seems to be overlooked by these people. Evolution is naturalism. It is progress by the operation of resident forces. But since the ordinary processes of nature do not account for all of the phenomena of nature, these men introduced God as supervisor and director in order to account for the sudden and surprising leaps which evolution sometimes takes. If it is necessary for God to intervene in order to cause the advances, which evolutionists claim, wherein is nature doing the improving? Surely if miracle or the supernatural be present then the thing they call evolution must be renamed, for the essence of evolution is unaided continuity of progress. If the process, with its extraordinary advance-leaps, must be accounted for by the direct action of God, then the process cannot strictly be termed evolution. Creation and miracle are not properly in the category of evolution. Yet creation and miracle are necessary to account fully for either the geological or the modern eras. No hyphenated evolution will change its character. It is not a science, but a false philosophy. It cannot be made orthodox by calling it "theistic."

"YE ARE GODS"

Please explain "Ye are Gods" (John 10:34).

The quotation is from Psalms 82:6. The psalm is a reproof of unrighteous judges who were the official representatives of God to the people, and so elevated above ordinary as sometimes to be called "Gods" figuratively. If they were called "gods," unto whom the word of God merely "came," why should Christ, "the Word of God," be called a blasphemmer because He said He was "the Son of God" (vv. 35, 36)? Such is Christ's argument.

HAVING AND NOT HAVING

How do you explain the latter half of Matthew 13:12?

There are two ways in which a person may have and yet have not: (1) By non-realization; and (2) by non-use. It is a spiritual law (applicable to the physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual life) that lack of use, or wrong use, of whatever we possess deteriorates or atrophies and we suffer loss, either partial or total. In addition to this retributive judgment, which always is operative, there may be the direct judgment of God, as in the case of the Jewish nation. God has a right to hold us accountable for the proper and full use of all of our powers, possessions, and privileges.

THE INHERITED EARTH

What "earth" is to be inherited by the meek (Matt. 5:5)?

Since this promise was first made in Psalm 37:11 it should be interpreted in that light. The word translated "earth" may as well be translated "land." This would be in accord with the promise made to Abraham and his descendants that they should inherit the land of Canaan. Since this promise never has been fulfilled, it awaits the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. The principle of award, however, has a broader application than to the Jewish people. The character of the "meek" (not the self-seeking, the proud, the high-minded, the arrogant) is such that delights God and He will bountifully reward those possessing it. Christ was "meek and lowly in heart," yet His is the kingdom, and they who follow Him and possess His spirit are to be associated with Him in administering the affairs of the kingdom. "All things" are now theirs (1 Cor. 3:21, 22), and in due time they shall "inherit all things" (Rev. 21:7).

Are the Abrahamic promises for Gentiles as well as for Jews?

The Gentiles who by faith are children of Abraham, and hence his "seed" (Gal. 3:29) inherit his spiritual blessings. But God made promises to the natural "seed" of Abraham concerning the perpetual ownership of the Canaan in which the Gentiles have no share, save that they will enjoy the prosperity and peace which in the days of Israelitish supremacy shall encompass the world.

MAN A FREE MORAL AGENT

Please give Scripture showing that man is a free agent.

The fact is assumed rather than asserted. The personality of God is the archetype of man's personality, hence man is self-conscious, self-directing, morally free and accountable to His Maker. God's will is sovereign in all things, but this is in accord with the fact that man also in his sphere is free to will, even in the matter of his own salvation (John 5:40). Salvation itself is wholly of God, but man is free to reject it, or, under the gracious operations of His Spirit, enter into life.

FOREKNOWLEDGE AND FREE AGENCY

Since it was prophesied that Judas would betray Jesus, could he have chosen not to do it (John 6:64)?

Man is always a free agent. Judas was conscious of so acting. Had he acted under divine compulsion in such a matter God could not have held him accountable for his deed. God's foreknowledge of what we are going to do does not predetermine our acts.

PAUL ON PREDESTINATION

Will you please explain Paul's statements on predestination and election? Do they destroy man's free agency?

These teachings were never intended to confuse, but to comfort us. They emphasize God's part in our salvation, and our assurance has no other ground to rest upon. These doctrines are for believers only. To the unsaved, God says, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." No, predestination and election do not contradict or destroy man's free will. God in His sovereignty made man a free agent, and never does violence to his freedom to choose and decide. Only upon this basis could God hold man accountable to Him, and even in the matter of salvation God predestinated to eternal life only those who believe on His Son.

MAN'S THREEFOLD NATURE

Man has a threefold nature, mind, soul, spirit. What is the meaning of each?

The Scriptural threefold division of man is spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. 5:23). In our spiritual nature we reach the highest sphere of our being, through which, being quickened by

the Holy Spirit, we have knowledge of God and spiritual things. Through the soul, or natural man, we have knowledge of ourselves and can view the world without. This is the realm of the mind and of the natural affections. The body gives us contact with and knowledge of the physical world. The body is our sense consciousness; the soul our self-consciousness; the spirit our God-consciousness.

SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

Will you please explain Genesis 9:5, 6?

The plain teaching is that since man is made in God's image, if a man's life is wantonly taken, as Cain took the life of Abel, the agent of destruction must be destroyed, whether it be man or beast.

SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY

(1) Is man a trinity—spirit, soul, and body? (2) Please define soul and spirit.

(1) The Bible speaks of man as a trinity (1 Thess. 5:23). But sometimes the terms "soul" and "spirit" are used interchangeably. (2) In the psychological sense we may say, speaking generally, that its soul is the person, and body and spirit the agents. Dr. Stalker states the facts differently: "The soul is the intermediate element in man's nature, between the body at the bottom and the spirit at the top." Through the body the soul is in touch with the material world, and through his spirit he may communicate with God. The spirit is "the throne of God in human nature." The soul of the natural man may reason, but never worship or pray. The spirit has reason, love, conscience, and can commune with God. When the body dies the soul and spirit are not separated.

IS WAR MURDER?

(1) Where does the Bible teach that it is right for brothers in Christ to kill each other or anybody else? (2) When and where has the command, "Thou shalt not kill," been annulled, or has it a different application in time of war than in time of peace? (3) How can believers in Christ, living in different countries, be enemies to one another when Jesus says that all believers are one in Him? (4) Supposing they could be enemies because their governments were at war, how can

followers of Christ be justified in killing one another when Jesus explicitly told them to love their enemies?

(1, 2) The command, "Thou shalt not kill," was to prevent the taking of human life wantonly through anger, envy, revenge, or any other unlawful manner. This is the most heinous sin. But when murder has been thus committed God's penalty was, and is, that the murderer himself should be put to death, and the executioner be some other man. This does not render the second person a murderer, for he is simply obeying another divine law, one which God has given in order to punish the murderer and also to prevent further murders. God's word clearly makes this distinction. See Genesis 9:5, 6; Exodus 21:12-15. The same principle applies to war. We deplore war as much as anybody can. There is little excuse for most wars and the results are usually deplorable. Wars for the purpose of mere gain or for revenge are murderous in their character; but there are also righteous wars, as when God makes use of a people as a whole to be His executioners of justice. See Deuteronomy 7:2, 16; 20:16, 17. (3) When a nation engages in a righteous war against some lawless nation it is impossible for the Christians of the one nation to distinguish between the Christians and non-Christians of the other nation. Nor does this prove that hatred exists, any more than it proves that any executioner of law bears a personal enmity against those upon whom the penalty of the law must fall. (4) Would the questioner say that when a parent justly punishes his child therefore he is the child's enemy, and so does not love him? Or, will He accuse God of lack of love when He has destroyed men by the thousands, as in the Flood, or when He destroyed all of the first born in the land of Egypt? Loving our enemies does not mean that they shall escape the penalty of breaking righteous laws. War sometimes is one of God's agencies to judge nations. It is said of Christ, "In righteousness he doth judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11).

HIDDEN SPOTS

Will you please explain the first part of Jude 12?

The Revised translation is: "These are they who are hidden rocks [or spots] in your love feasts, when they feast with you." In the early church these love feasts preceded the celebration of the Lord's Supper, but later they were separated therefrom. Into these love feasts of the Christians certain ungodly men

sometimes crept in unawares (v. 4). Peter also refers to such (2 Pet. 2:13). As "hidden rocks" their presence might "make shipwreck" of the souls of the unsuspecting or inexperienced Christian. They were self-seeking ones who sought only to feed themselves. Against such false teachers or insincere professors of Christianity Jude penned his burning words of condemnation.

FORTUNE TELLING

Is it not wrong for a professing Christian to have his fortune told by a professional fortune teller even though it be done for mere amusement?

In our judgment it is wrong. Such a method of inquiring into the future is condemned by God. They who practice such things are "an abomination unto the Lord" (Deut. 18:10-14). "Just for the fun of it" may lead to something quite serious, for spiritism in any form is of the Devil. God has revealed to us only so much of the future as is best for us to know. Our ignorance of the future tends to develop our personal faith in God and causes us to walk more closely with our Lord.

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